

COMMERCIAL LIVESTOCK GRAZING IN GRAND TETON NATIONAL PARK

By Robin Smith
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Forest Guardians seeks to preserve and restore native wildlands and wildlife in the American Southwest through fundamental reform of public policies and practices.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Grand Teton National Park is truly a unique and extraordinary place—one of the few remaining places in the contiguous 48 states that contain all the species of wildlife that existed prior to the arrival of the first white settlers to Jackson Hole. By law, the National Park Service is required to manage the Park “...to conserve the scenery and the natural and historic objects and the wild life therein...by such means as will leave them unimpaired for future generations.”

That is why many tourists who have driven thousands of miles across a landscape dotted with cows to see one of the last remnants of wild America are surprised and disappointed when they see cattle grazing in the Park. Two and a half million people from all over the world visit Grand Teton each year to experience a pristine wilderness landscape—one that differs from the thousands of cattle ranches they passed through to get there. Unfortunately, when they arrive they are more likely to see a cow than a bison. This is because nearly 1,600 cows are permitted to graze in the Park; the Park’s bison population is less than 800.

In 1950, when Grand Teton National Park was expanded to its present size of 310,000 acres, 31 ranchers were allowed to continue grazing 4,400 animals on 69,000 acres in the Park for the remainder of their life or the lifetime of their heirs. Since then, the number of ranchers grazing has diminished through attrition as they have relinquished their grazing privileges or died. By 2004, just six ranches remained with permits to graze 1,800 cows and horses on 36,000 acres of Park property.

Until recently, the National Park Service has pursued the phase-out of livestock grazing as intended by the 1950 legislation as evidenced by the fact that 25 of the original 31 ranchers have relinquished their grazing privileges. Now it appears that some of the remaining ranches may be holding the Park, Jackson Hole, and the public hostage by demanding their grazing privileges be continued or they will turn their private land over to real estate developers.

While grazing in the Park provides a prestigious lifestyle and private profit center for a privileged few, it provides no public benefits. To the contrary, it causes: dewatering of streams and destruction of riparian habitat; loss of native plant communities and infestations of noxious weeds; displacement of elk and bison on summer range and a decrease in winter forage; an increased potential for disease transmission from cattle to elk and bison; a decrease in small mammal and bird populations; grizzly bears and wolves to be harassed, captured, relocated, and/or euthanized; and lost opportunities for visitors to experience wildlife in a pristine, wild setting. Meanwhile, grazing related expenditures combined with a loss of revenue from charging below market grazing fees result in U.S. taxpayers losing at least \$285,000 each year to perpetuate this tragedy.

Our National Park System is experiencing budget shortfalls of \$600 million annually and has a \$5 billion backlog of projects that desperately need funding. With its budget stretched beyond its capacity to address legitimate needs of our Parks, it is hard to imagine there could be a more egregious waste of taxes than spending scarce dollars to allow the continued use of the Park in a manner that is incompatible with the purpose for which it was created.

To ensure Grand Teton National Park remains one of our country’s crown jewels, the National Park Service must phase out livestock grazing as envisioned in the legislation that created the Park and begin managing it “unimpaired for future generations” as required by law.

INTRODUCTION

By law, our national parks are required to be managed "...to conserve the scenery and the natural and historic objects and the wild life therein and to provide for the enjoyment of the same in such manner and by such means as will leave them unimpaired for future generations."¹ In its early years, the National Park Service (NPS) thought this mandate meant their primary conservation responsibility was to preserve the scenery exactly as it appeared at the time a park was established so that it would always look that way.

Today, the NPS realizes landscapes change naturally over time due to fires, floods, plant succession, and geological events. Thus, it is nature's biological processes, not scenery that must be preserved unimpaired if we are to truly protect our parks. Current science-based management is intended to preserve the ecological integrity of our park lands by allowing nature to follow its own course with as little interference as possible from humans. In areas where natural processes such as fire or predator/prey relationships have been eliminated, the NPS works to restore them.

That is why many tourists who have driven thousands of miles across a landscape dotted with cows to see one of the last remnants of wild America are surprised and disappointed when they see cattle grazing in Grand Teton National Park (GTNP or Park). Two and a half million people from all over the world visit GTNP² each year to experience a pristine wilderness landscape—one that differs from the thousands of cattle ranches they passed through to get there. Unfortunately, when they arrive they are twice as likely to see a cow than a bison. This is because nearly 1,600 cows are permitted to graze in the Park; the Park's bison population is less than 800.

GTNP is not alone in allowing the use of our scarce publicly owned park lands as a private cattle feedlot for a privileged few to make a private profit. Livestock grazing is currently permitted in 32 units of the National Park System.³ How did our national parks, which were born out of an egalitarian legacy, become private profit centers for a small, elite group of ranchers? How did Grand Teton National Park come to have more cows than bison? To find out requires going back to the days when the first pioneers of European descent settled in Jackson Hole.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Livestock grazing has had a negative impact on the area now known as GTNP since the days prior to the creation of the Park. The Snake River plains and foothills of Jackson Hole have been grazed by domestic livestock since settlement of the area in the late 1800s. Many westerners of this era believed the myth that the arid West could be transformed into a garden through irrigation. William Smythe, founder of the journal *The Irrigation Age*, wrote:

[Wyoming's] greatest resources are those of water and of land. It is estimated that not less than ten million acres of fertile land may be reclaimed by irrigation. Distributed

¹ National Park Service Act of 1916.

² National Park Service. Undated. Grand Teton National Park Facts. Viewed at the website of the National Park Service, found at: www.nps.gov/grte/pphtml/facts.html, on May 15, 2004.

³ Kerr, Andy and Mark Salvo. Undated. Livestock Grazing in the National Park and Wilderness Preservation Systems. Viewed at the website of Andy Kerr, found at: <http://www.andykerr.net/Grazing/LGinNP-NWS.html>, on April 6, 2004.

rather evenly through different portions of the State, and surrounded by the wealth of mine, forest, water-power, and natural pastures, this irrigable land will furnish the solid foundation of a great and manifold economic life in future centuries.⁴

Smythe believed that by developing Wyoming's natural resources, including irrigation of its "very abundant water supply," Wyoming "must some day sustain a population as large as that of Ohio and Illinois."⁵ This pie-in-the-sky thinking led the Bureau of Reclamation to construct a dam in 1906 to enlarge Jackson Lake to store water for Idaho farmers and ranchers. According to author Robert Righter, "The damming of Jackson Lake was an act of environmental desecration second only to the inundation of Yosemite's Hetch Hetchy Valley."⁶

In 1919, forty-seven years after the creation of Yellowstone National Park, a bill to expand its boundaries to include Jackson Lake, much of the Teton mountain range, and the areas known today as the John D. Rockefeller Jr. Memorial Parkway and Teton Wilderness in the Bridger-Teton National Forest, was unanimously approved by the U.S. House of Representatives. The bill died in the Senate due to opposition from Idaho Senator John Nugent who feared a few Idaho sheepmen would experience a reduction of grazing allotments and loss of sheep grazing permits within the area proposed for park expansion.⁷

According to historian Robert Righter:

Jackson Hole ranchers were...encouraged by the success of the small number of Idaho sheepmen in killing the 1918 [Yellowstone National Park expansion] bill. They noted that it was possible to force their collective will through political action. Whatever the facts of the park extension regarding grazing rights, the livestock interests opposed in principle further federal control... After defeat of the bill, F.J. Hagenharth, president of the National Wool Growers Association, confessed to [National Park Service Director] Stephen Mather that their opposition was based on the attitude of national parks *in general* regarding sheep, and the fact that livestock grazing privileges had been curtailed "from twenty-five to thirty-five percent during the past three years." Clearly it was distrust and hostility toward the federal government in general and the National Park Service in particular that prompted much of the ranchers' opposition.⁸

Over the course of the next ten years, ranchers used their newly found political muscle to put protection of the Tetons on hold. Nevertheless, their influence was overcome in 1929 when

⁴ Smythe, William E. 1900. *The Conquest of Arid America*. Page 208. Published by Harpers and Brothers Publishers. 1900. Viewed at the website of the Library of Congress, found at: www.memory.loc.gov/ammem/consrvquery.html, on July 14, 2003.

⁵ *Ibid.*, pages 207 – 208.

⁶ Righter, Robert W. 1982. *Crucible for Conservation: The Struggle for Grand Teton National Park*. Page 10. Published by Grand Teton Natural History Association. Reprinted in 2000.

⁷ National Park Service. 2001. *Grazing Use and Open Space Study and Environmental Analysis: Grand Teton National Park, Teton County, Wyoming*. Page 3. Published by the U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, Grand Teton National Park. April 1, 2001.

⁸ Righter, Robert W. 1982. *Crucible for Conservation: The Struggle for Grand Teton National Park*. Pages 30 - 31. Published by Grand Teton Natural History Association. Reprinted in 2000.

legislation to create GTNP was finally passed. Even in defeat, livestock ranchers were able to shape the new Park boundaries. To gain enough support to pass in Congress, the bill creating GTNP included only the mountains and the eight glacial lakes at their base, which consisted of about 96,000 acres.⁹ Not included were Jackson Lake, the Snake River, and tens of thousands of acres of sagebrush flatlands that provide the striking contrast to the mountains. Agricultural interests and dude ranchers had been successful in minimizing the size of the Park to a mere transfer of the eastern side of most of the Tetons from the Forest Service to the NPS.

In the 1930s, efforts to correct these deficiencies were initiated. These efforts to expand the Park to include Jackson Lake and the sagebrush flats were opposed by the National Parks Association (today called National Parks Conservation Association). The 1906 conversion of Jackson Lake into a reservoir was the primary reason the National Parks Association opposed expanding GTNP to include the Lake. In the view of the National Parks Association, dams and reservoirs did not meet national park standards. The Association believed national parks should include only areas of pristine nature. In their opinion, the damming of Jackson Lake to irrigate farms and ranches had made it unworthy of consideration for inclusion in the National Park System.¹⁰ The Association was allied with cattlemen who condemned the proposed Park expansion as a diabolical plot to deny them grazing privileges¹¹ and Teton County officials who were concerned over the loss of tax revenues from the removal of private land from tax rolls.

Despite this opposition, President Roosevelt created Jackson Hole National Monument when he signed Executive Order 2578 transferring 222,000 acres—including Jackson Lake and the grazed sagebrush flatlands—to the NPS in 1943.

Ranchers have historically had a disproportionate influence on politics throughout the west, as is the case in Wyoming where Cliff Hansen, a Jackson Hole rancher, was elected Teton County Commissioner in 1942. Hansen later served as Wyoming's governor (1963 – 1967) and U.S. Senator (1967 – 1979). As a County Commissioner, Hansen was one of the most vocal critics of the expansion of Jackson Hole National Monument.¹² Hansen, a member of the “Jackson Hole Anti-monument Committee,” wrote Wyoming Governor Lester Hunt informing him that the people of Jackson Hole did not want a national monument and would not compromise. They wanted “total victory” and an “unconditional surrender” by the National Park Service.¹³ With the support of County Commissioner Hansen and the Wyoming Congressional delegation, Governor Hunt wrote a letter to President Roosevelt threatening to call out the police to “evict from the proposed Jackson Hole Monument any federal official who attempts to assume authority.”¹⁴

⁹ National Park Service. 1989. Statement of Management: Grand Teton National Park. Page 4. United States Department of Interior, National Park Service. October 1989.

¹⁰ Righter, Robert W. 1982. *Crucible for Conservation: The Struggle for Grand Teton National Park*. Pages 88 - 90. Published by Grand Teton Natural History Association. Reprinted in 2000.

¹¹ Betts, Robert B. 1978. *Along the Ramparts of the Tetons: The Saga of Jackson Hole, Wyoming*. Page 203. Published by University Press of Colorado.

¹² National Park Service. 2001. *Grazing Use and Open Space Study and Environmental Analysis: Grand Teton National Park, Teton County, Wyoming*. Page 26. Published by the U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, Grand Teton National Park. April 1, 2001.

¹³ Righter, Robert W. 1982. *Crucible for Conservation: The Struggle for Grand Teton National Park*. Page 119. Published by Grand Teton Natural History Association. Reprinted in 2000.

¹⁴ Betts, Robert B. 1978. *Along the Ramparts of the Tetons: The Saga of Jackson Hole, Wyoming*. Page 208. Published by University Press of Colorado.

Historian Robert Betts writes:

Roosevelt's signature on the proclamation was barely dry when Wyoming Congressman Frank Barrett introduced a bill to abolish the Jackson Hole National Monument, reject Rockefeller's [donated] properties and restore the lands taken from the Teton National Forest to the Forest Service. Such was the temper of Congress that there was a good chance it would pass, for many members of the Senate and House felt that Roosevelt had gone too far and should be taught a lesson. Even as hearings were being held on Barrett's bill, Wyoming Senator Joseph O'Mahoney used a familiar congressional tactic to hamstring the National Park Service from assuming control of the new lands by attaching a rider to the Interior Department's annual appropriations bill forbidding the use of any of the funds for the monument's administration. Meanwhile, as this was going on, out in Wyoming a group of Jackson Holers, mostly cattlemen, became too impatient to wait for the outcome of these parliamentary maneuvers. On a morning in May, they gathered at the Elks Club in Jackson, carrying guns, and cheered speeches rallying them to march on the monument and force a showdown with the federal government for their rights, even if it might lead to bloodshed.

Despite a guarantee given by Secretary [of Interior] Ickes to honor all cattle rights-of-way and grazing privileges in the new monument, the cattlemen chose to believe that they would be met at the monument's boundary by armed federal authorities and turned back. This was a fantasy of their own creation, because local National Park Service officials had repeatedly assured them they had as free access as ever to these lands. But the fantasy became more and more real in their minds, until they finally decided to strap on their guns and defy the federal government by driving six hundred and fifty yearling Herefords across the monument. Wallace Beery, the gravel-throated Hollywood actor who had made a Western movie in Jackson Hole and had built a summer home in the valley, now joined their ranks. On the morning the men met at the Elks Club while their wives tended the assembled Herefords on a ranch north of Jackson, Beery appeared theatrically astride a white horse, wearing the cowboy hat he had worn in the movie and with a .30-.30 Winchester in a rifle sheath on his saddle. So caught up was he in his role that as he added his voice to those of the other speechmakers he is said to have ordered the group to "Shoot to kill!"

Up to this point, everything had gone according to plan as the men at the Elks Club checked their weapons and expressed their strong feelings against the monument before herding the cattle on their do-or-die march. Farther up the valley, however, the cattle became so restless the wives either could not hold them in place or decided to start the drive on their own, and before they knew it they had crossed the southern boundary of the monument and were on their way upcountry. When the word got back to town, Wallace Berry and the others threw their guns and several cases of beer into cars and raced north, still convinced a fight was to come. To their disappointment, it turned out the issue they had created in their minds was no issue at all. Not a single federal official was

anywhere in sight. “So,” as Donald Hough wrote, “all concerned now sat down on the bank of a small creek marking the boundary of the Monument, and threw empty beer cans across it, each toss accompanied by loud imprecations directed at the Government of the United States, as personified by the Monument. Then they went home.”¹⁵

But the battle to dismantle the National Monument was far from over. In 1944, Congressman Barrett’s bill to abolish the Jackson Hole National Monument passed in both the House and Senate. President Roosevelt then killed it with a pocket veto, evoking still another outcry from ranchers about his dictatorial methods.

Determined to abolish the National Monument, the State of Wyoming went to court to challenge whether the president had the statutory authority to proclaim the monument under the Antiquities Act of 1906. Wyoming Deputy Attorney General John McIntyre was convinced he did not. McIntyre thought “the pretended monument” was not “legally constituted” and “the entire proceeding [was] illegal.” Righter writes:

In the *State of Wyoming v. Franke*, the state sought to prove the area within Jackson Hole National Monument contained no objects of particular scientific or historic interest. In February 1945, federal Judge Blake Kennedy dismissed the case declaring that it was “a controversy between the legislative and executive branches of the Government in which...the Court cannot interfere.” It was the burden of Congress to pass “remedial legislation” as “the disposition of government lands inherently rests in its Legislative branch.” Thus, the court found “generally for the defendant” and it was clear that redress for the state of Wyoming lay only in congressional action.¹⁶

As time passed, the mood of the country changed. Not only did Congressional action to undo the Monument become improbable, it was viewed as undesirable. Most people, including residents of Wyoming, began to recognize the need to protect this special place. In keeping with this change in public opinion, Congress passed legislation in 1950 expanding GTNP to its present size of 310,000 acres, largely by incorporating Jackson Hole National Monument into the Park.

Even so, anti-federal government sentiment and local grazing concerns shaped the Park legislation. To prevent future “dictatorial” U.S. presidents from acting unilaterally, the legislation expanding GTNP stripped away the president’s authority to expand or create national parks or monuments in Wyoming and vested this power solely in Congress.¹⁷ To this day, Wyoming is the only state in the country in which the president cannot use his authority under the American Antiquities Act¹⁸ to create a national monument on publicly owned land that contains historic landmarks, historic and prehistoric structures, and other objects of historic or scientific interest.

¹⁵ Betts, Robert B. 1978. *Along the Ramparts of the Tetons: The Saga of Jackson Hole, Wyoming*. Pages 208 – 210. Published by University Press of Colorado.

¹⁶ Righter, Robert W. 1982. *Crucible for Conservation: The Struggle for Grand Teton National Park*. Page 120. Published by Grand Teton Natural History Association. Reprinted in 2000.

¹⁷ 64 Stat. 849. September 14, 1950.

¹⁸ American Antiquities Act. 16 USC § 431-433. June 8, 1906.

To address local grazing concerns, the 1950 Park expansion legislation allowed for the continuation of leases, permits, and licenses in existence at the time of the law's passage. This included the protection of existing grazing rights and stock driveways for trailing cattle through the Park to grazing allotments in the Park and to adjacent National Forest allotments.¹⁹ According to the NPS:

The legislation [to create Grand Teton National Park] specifically authorized the renewal of grazing permits that existed prior to September 14, 1950. Grazing permits for ranchlands outside park boundaries were to be allowed for a period of 25 years, and thereafter during the lifetime of the person possessing such grazing permits and the lifetime of his or her heirs, successors, or assigns who were immediate family members at the time. Grazing permits for ranch lands within park boundaries were to be renewed until the title of said lands was vested in the United States.²⁰

At the time GTNP was enlarged, five groups of ranchers maintained grazing privileges inside the Park:

1. Ranchers whose base property (private land) was located outside the Park. This group had grazing privileges extended for 25 years, and thereafter, for their lifetime or the lifetime of their immediate family members living in 1950. Upon their death, or the death of their heirs, grazing privileges expired.
2. Ranchers whose base property was inside the Park's new boundaries. This group was granted grazing privileges until the federal government acquired their inholdings.
3. Triangle X Ranch. This ranch was purchased from the Turner family by the Snake River Land Company (owned by John D. Rockefeller Jr.) in the 1920s and then leased back to the Turner's who operated it as a dude ranch. When GTNP was expanded in 1950, the Snake River Land Company donated the land to the Park and Triangle X became a park concessionaire.
4. The owner of Teton Valley Ranch, a private ranch located outside of GTNP's boundaries. Teton Valley Ranch was granted a grazing lease in 1949 on 503 acres located inside the Park by the Snake River Company for the lifetime of the owner and the lifetime of his two children. This land was later donated to GTNP subject to the lease.
5. The State of Wyoming. A Section of land²¹ owned by the State of Wyoming and located inside GTNP's boundary near the community of Kelly was used for grazing livestock. Because this property belongs to the State of Wyoming, the Park has no control over its use.

Following the 1950 Park expansion, these four groups comprised 31 ranchers grazing 4,459 animals on 68,756 acres, or 22 percent of the Park's 310,000 acres (See Table 1).

¹⁹ National Park Service. 2001. Grazing Use and Open Space Study and Environmental Analysis: Grand Teton National Park, Teton County, Wyoming. Page 3. Published by the U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, Grand Teton National Park. April 1, 2001.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ A section of land is one square mile and contains 640 acres.

Table 1 GRAZING IN GRAND TETON NATIONAL PARK AT THE TIME OF PARK EXPANSION			
Type of Grazing Privileges	# of Ranchers	# of Animals	# of Acres Grazed
Grand Fathered by Law ²² (Groups 1 & 2 above)	28	4,110	65,802
Triangle X Ranch (Group 3 above)	1	120	1,838
Teton Valley Ranch (Group 4 above)	1	160	503
State of Wyoming Lessee (Group 5 above)	1	69	613
TOTALS	31	4,459	68,756

Since 1950, the number of ranchers grazing in GTNP has diminished through attrition as grand fathered permittees and/or their children have relinquished their grazing privileges or died. In 1995 and 1996, two of the last remaining heirs holding lifetime grand fathered grazing permits in the Park died unexpectedly (Mead/Hansen Ranches and Jackson Hole Hereford Ranch). A third heir died in 2000 (Moulton Ranch).

Suddenly faced with the expiration of these grazing permits, some people in Jackson Hole expressed concern over the potential threat of development of the 4,366 acres of private lands located outside GTNP that served as the base ranches for these permit holders. With 97 percent of Teton County consisting of publicly owned land, these three private ranches represent some of the last large parcels of undeveloped land in the County. In the past decade, the real estate boom has pushed the price of an acre of land to nearly \$500,000 in Jackson Hole. This makes it one of the few areas in the country where an argument can legitimately be made that if livestock grazing on publicly owned lands is eliminated, then the base ranch will likely be sold to real estate developers. According to the NPS:

Today, protecting open space near the park continues to be a concern with residents and ranchers in the Jackson Hole area. Conditions are changing rapidly: local and visiting populations have greatly increased; residential and commercial development on private lands near the park has grown dramatically; and the grazing industry and livestock market have become more tenuous so that financial and tax pressures have been driving many agricultural landowners to sell their properties.²³

Because of these concerns, and undoubtedly under political pressure from the families who lost their Park grazing permits, Congress passed Public Law 105-81 in 1997. This law required the NPS to prepare a study of grazing use and open space within and adjacent to Grand Teton

²² Figures for this row and Triangle X Ranch in the next row come from: National Park Service. 2001. Grazing Use and Open Space Study and Environmental Analysis: Grand Teton National Park, Teton County, Wyoming. Page 3. Published by the U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, Grand Teton National Park. April 1, 2001.

²³ National Park Service. 2001. Grazing Use and Open Space Study and Environmental Analysis: Grand Teton National Park, Teton County, Wyoming. Page 4. Published by the U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, Grand Teton National Park. April 1, 2001.

National Park. The purpose of this study was to explore:

...various ways to preserve open space lands that are adjacent to the park and that help protect or enhance park resources and values. The loss of the open character of these lands could impact park lands by (1) affecting available wildlife habitat; (2) introducing air, water, and noise pollution; (3) increasing human use; and (4) intruding on the scenic qualities that are so closely associated with Grand Teton National Park, whether these qualities are enjoyed from inside or outside the park.²⁴

The study was also charged with developing “workable solutions that are fiscally responsible and acceptable to the National Park Service, the public, local government, and the landowners in the area.”²⁵

Provisions of Public Law 105-81 extended grazing privileges to the heirs of the ranches with grazing permits that had expired due to the death of their family member who held the permit until the open space study was completed and the study’s recommendations were implemented. If, prior to the recommendations being implemented, the ranches with grazing privileges were sold or no longer used for agriculture the grazing permits would be cancelled.²⁶

In March 2000, GTNP released an assessment of the environmental impacts that would occur as a result of extending grazing leases until the recommendations of the open space study are implemented. Among other things, this report found:

Continuing...livestock grazing...will:

1. destroy cryptobiotic crusts (soil organisms that bind the soils and prevent soil loss)...;
2. destroy vegetation in riparian areas that are sensitive to disturbance, and areas with severe slopes, causing susceptibility to erosion and loss of habitat for wetland wildlife species and ground nesting birds;
3. compact soils on areas of bare ground and/or previous disturbance, which will reduce soil fertility and plant productivity, as well as cause changes in plant composition;
4. crumple edges of irrigation ditches, watering canals and watering holes, leading to sedimentation of streams as irrigation water is emptied into natural riparian ecosystems;
5. and loosen soils by trampling, which will cause continued susceptibility to erosion by wind and water.

²⁴ National Park Service. 2001. Grazing Use and Open Space Study and Environmental Analysis: Grand Teton National Park, Teton County, Wyoming. Page 1. Published by the U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, Grand Teton National Park. April 1, 2001.

²⁵ Public Law 105-81. Section 1(8). November 18, 1997.

²⁶ Ibid., Sections 3(a) and 3(b).

Irrigation systems and watering ditches are in poor repair, causing increased erosion and sedimentation into streams, as well as ineffective use of available water resources. Cattle often cause the collapse of irrigation and stream embankments, increasing erosion potential by wind and water, as well as soil instability. Cattle distribution is uneven, and as a result many areas suffer from compaction and loss of vegetative cover, such as near salt licks, irrigation canals, watering holes, and riparian areas. These are prone to erosion and the possible invasion of other, less desirable species...

[L]ethal control of wolves in response to depredation on legally present domestic livestock on park lands remains a possibility.

Impacts of grazing on grizzly bears could include:

- The loss of habitat due to the presence of livestock and associated human activities in otherwise available grizzly bear habitat.
- Impacts to individual bears [and to the Yellowstone bear population] as a result of trapping, handling, translocating, or removing bears, including changing behavior and activity patterns, and reducing forage efficiency, reproductive potential, and survival.

[T]he presence of livestock in sage grouse habitat could result in trampled nest sites, a reduction of forbs available to sage grouse hens and their young, and a high mortality of sagebrush seedlings. In addition, grazing pastures in the fall reduces the amount of residual vegetation available for nesting habitat (cover) in the early spring, which leaves nest sites more exposed to predators and reduces available forage. In general, excessive grazing in sage grouse breeding habitat tends to have negative impacts on grouse populations. Preliminary results from research conducted within the Park suggest that overwinter survival may provide the causative factor for the local decreases in sage grouse numbers... With known leks near the southern allotments, virtually all the sagebrush-dominated habitat within the allotments has some potential as nesting habitat.

An additional potential impact is disease transmission from cattle to elk. [A wildlife biologist] found enterocolitis in neonatal elk in the Elk Ranch area in 1991 – 1992. Investigation revealed Corona and Rotaviruses as the causal agents, which can be transmitted by domestic livestock. Although the source for the infection is unknown, the potential for transmission exists. Other infectious agents such as *Brucella abortus*, *Pasteurella* spp., respiratory syncytial virus (rSV), parainfluenza type 3 virus (P13), bovine viral diarrhea (BVD), may also be transmitted between ungulates and cattle...

The primary effects on bison are competition for available forage and the displacement of bison by livestock. Habitat overlap between bison and cattle in the Park is considerable, increasing competition for forage and the potential for

disease transmission (see elk section above)... As the [bison] population increases, competition for resources will increase as will the potential for disease transmission.

The primary effect on moose is the displacement of moose by livestock, primarily in riparian areas.

The primary effects on antelope and mule deer are competition for available forage and the displacement of these species by livestock.

Impacts on birds would include the trampling of nests of ground-nesting birds, and a reduction in habitat effectiveness due to a decrease in diversity within sagebrush habitat in response to livestock grazing.²⁷

Despite the litany of negative impacts outlined in the environmental assessment by Park scientists, the NPS issued a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI)—thus, giving permittees the go-ahead to continue grazing.

The draft *Grazing Use and Open Space Study and Environmental Analysis* for GTNP was completed in 2001. Only two ranches were included in this study—the Hansen/Mead Ranches and Jackson Hole Hereford Ranch. Moulton Ranch was not included because it already had a conservation easement placed on it that maintained the 511-acre property in open space. None of the other ranches holding grazing permits were included in the open space study because Public Law 105-81 required a study only of ranches in which the base property was located outside the Park.

The *Grazing Use and Open Space Study and Environmental Analysis* looked at four options for protecting open space within Jackson Hole. Of all the comments received during the 30-day public comment period on this study, 79 percent favored discontinuing grazing in the Park. According to one commenter:

At a minimum, the recommendation should be to terminate all park grazing permits that would not currently be viable except for Public Law 105-81. The possibility that the NPS and Secretary of the Interior may recommend that livestock grazing continue in the park in order to prevent ranchers from selling their lands for development would be laughable, if it were not so serious. Domestic livestock ranching has, and will continue to, damage the park, its wildlife, vegetation, soil, water quality, riparian areas, and ecology and, therefore, must be discontinued.²⁸

As of June 2004, the NPS had yet to make a recommendation to Congress on a preferred option. Once the recommendations are received, it will be up to Congress to select an option and pass

²⁷ National Park Service. 2000. Short Term Continued Grazing in Grand Teton National Park, Environmental Assessment. Pages 48 - 57. Published by the U.S. Department of Interior, National Park Service, Grand Teton National Park. March 2000.

²⁸ Shubert, D.J. 2001. Letter to Laurie Domler, Planner, National Park Service, Grand Teton National Park, from D.J. Shubert, Wildlife Biologist, The Fund For Animals. March 20, 2001.

legislation mandating its implementation.

GRAZING IN GRAND TETON NATIONAL PARK IN 2003

GTNP data indicate that five ranches were permitted to graze 195 horses and 678 cow/calf pairs (1,356 animals) on 14,712 acres in the Park. This data under-report the actual number of cows and acres grazed in the Park because it fails to include Teton Valley Ranch and the lessee of the Wyoming State Section of land. When these are included, it appears that, at the end of the 2003 grazing season 1,780 animals were permitted to graze 28,071 acres. (See Table 2)

Table 2 GRAZING PERMIT HOLDERS ²⁹ IN GRAND TETON NATIONAL PARK IN 2003			
Grazing Permittee	Permitted # of Animals	Permitted # of AUMs ³⁰	Permitted # of Acres
Moosehead Ranch	50 horses	284	2,585
Pinto Ranch	258 cow/calf pairs	525	9,759
Triangle Ranch	120 horses	572	1,838
JY Ranch	25 horses	120	530
Jackson Hole Hereford Ranch	420 cow/calf pairs	2,100	12,243
Teton Valley Ranch	75 cow/calf pairs 10 horses	468	503
State of Wyoming Lessee	69 cows	343	613
TOTALS	1,780³¹	4,412	28,071

In addition to the acreage used for grazing shown above, GTNP has designated three other areas as “mitigation” pastures. These pastures (or allotments) total 1,000 acres and are available on an as-needed basis for grazing up to 1,079 cow/calf pairs when grass is in short supply on permitted allotments.³² Another 7,291 acres in the Park are used by the Jackson Hole Hereford Ranch for trailing their herd from the Gros Ventre allotments surrounding Blacktail Butte to the Elk Ranch/Uhl Hill allotments southeast of Moran.

²⁹ For the purpose of this report, the term “permit holders” and “permittees” include Teton Valley Ranch, the lessee of the Wyoming State Section, and permittees grand fathered in by the 1950 park expansion legislation. This differs from the NPS definition that includes only those entities for which GTNP sets the conditions of the permit (the grand fathered permittees).

³⁰ Animal Unit Months. An AUM is defined as the amount of forage and/or browse required to feed a cow and her calf, a horse, or five sheep or goats for one month, or about 800 pounds. This also equates to the amount of forage required to support 1 moose, 2 elk, 8 deer, 7 bighorn sheep, or 11 pronghorn antelope for one month.

³¹ To calculate this figure, cow/calf pairs have been counted as two animals.

³² Division of Science and Resource Management, Grand Teton National Park. 2000. Draft Biological Assessment Threatened and Endangered Species for Reissuance of Grazing Permits in Grand Teton National Park. Page 8. March 15, 2000.

When the acreage for mitigation allotments and trailing are included, permits were available for a total of seven entities in 2003 to graze 1,780 animals that harvest 4,412 AUMs (or 3.5 million pounds of forage) on 24 allotments while utilizing up to 36,362 acres, or 12 percent of the area within the Park boundary. (A map showing the location of these areas used by livestock can be found on page 16.) However, the figure of 12 percent of the Park being grazed is deceptive since nearly 122,000 acres, or thirty-nine percent, of the Park consists of the Teton Mountains, the eight lakes at the base of the mountains, and Jackson Lake. When these non-grazable areas are removed from consideration, nineteen percent of the remaining Park is utilized by domestic livestock. Perhaps even more importantly, the acreage used for livestock grazing includes some of the best and most productive wildlife habitat in the park.

The permitted number of 4,412 AUMs also under-reports the amount of forage that may be eaten by livestock because it does not include the forage harvested from the mitigation allotments. Nor does this figure include the forage harvested during the multi-day trailing of the Jackson Hole Hereford Ranch's herd through the Park. It seems likely the intent of this trailing is not only to move animals from one area to another, but also to utilize as much free forage as possible along the way.

The actual amount of grazing that took place in 2003 was significantly less than the available permitted amount. This was because Jackson Hole Hereford Ranch, the largest permittee in the Park, requested a one-year non-use permit. In addition to Jackson Hole Hereford Ranch allotments not being grazed in 2003, Triangle X did not graze three of their allotments that total 909 acres, the mitigation allotments were not used, and no trailing took place from the south end of the Park to allotments in the north. Consequently, in 2003, the actual grazing figures were: 940 animals harvested 3,312 AUMs on 14 allotments totaling 14,463 acres, or 5 percent of the Park. These figures represent a 79 percent reduction in both the number of animals grazing and the number of acres available for grazing since 1950 when the Park expanded to its present size. Below is a discussion of each of the remaining seven livestock grazing permittees.

Moosehead Ranch—This is a dude/guest ranch on 120-acres of private property located in the Park approximately 5 miles south of Moran. Moosehead is licensed by GTNP to operate as a concessionaire offering its guests horseback trail riding in the Park. The Ranch's 50 horses graze 2,585 acres on three Park pastures that surround this inholding. Legislation passed in 1950 to create GTNP provide that as long as the permittee is in compliance with the terms and conditions of their permit, grazing privileges shall not be withdrawn until the park acquires the inholding. Over the years, concerns have been expressed about this grazing permit because: (1) some portions of Moosehead Ranch's allotments appear to be severely over-grazed by late summer; (2) the presence of foals provides the potential for conflicts with grizzly bears and wolves; and (3) the owners have shown intolerance of Park wildlife on their private property. As an example of this last concern, in the winter of 2001 – 2002, the owners of Moosehead Ranch had the Wyoming Fish and Game Department kill three bison that were on their property because they were eating their horses' forage.³³ This is ironic since the 284 AUMs of forage their horses are permitted to harvest each year from Park property mean 114 fewer tons of grass—enough to feed 47 elk for a year—are unavailable for the native wildlife the Park was created to protect.

³³ Camenzind, Franz. 2003. Personal communication, phone interview with Franz Camenzind, Executive Director, Jackson Hole Conservation Alliance. September 23, 2003.

Pinto Ranch—This private ranch, owned by Earnest Cockrell, is located east of Moran and south of Highway 26 on approximately 1,400 acres on the western edge of Buffalo Valley. Pinto Ranch straddles GTNP’s boundary with 450 acres of the ranch constituting a private inholding within the Park. Pinto Ranch’s livestock graze the 9,729-acre Pacific Creek Allotment in the northeast corner of the Park and 30-acre allotment (called the Gregory Grazing Pasture) west of and adjacent to Pinto Ranch. The Pacific Creek Allotment is managed in conjunction with an adjacent 10,700-acre allotment located in the Teton Wilderness of the Bridger-Teton National Forest. Both the Pinto Ranch and its GTNP/National Forest allotments are located in occupied grizzly bear and wolf habitat. In the past decade, wolves have utilized at least five different dens in the Park that are located within a few miles of the base property. In November 2002, the Teton wolf pack killed a cow on the Pinto Ranch. Wildlife Services was called in to “control” the wolves with the intent to kill three or four members of the pack. Traps were set to capture them near the site of the predation; however, when the pack did not return after a heavy snowfall, the traps were removed.³⁴ As with the Moosehead ranch, legislation passed to create GTNP provide that as long as the permittee complies with the terms and conditions of their permit, grazing privileges shall not be withdrawn until the park acquires this inholding.

Triangle X Ranch—Triangle X is a dude ranch offering overnight lodging and horseback trail riding in the Park. It is located on Park property about seven miles south of Moran on the east side of Route 191 and operates under a park concession contract. Triangle X Ranch grazes up to 120 horses in the Park on 1,400 acres of irrigated, fenced pastures.³⁵

JY Ranch—When Grand Teton NP was created in 1929, it encompassed only the 27 mile long, 3 to 9 mile wide Teton Range. Many people, including John D. Rockefeller Jr., believed the boundaries of this 96,000-acre park left out a critical piece—the sagebrush flatlands east of the Tetons. Rockefeller and NPS Director Horace Albright believed the remarkable views of the Tetons resulted from standing on the east side of the Snake River looking west across the miles of open country to the mountains. To prevent the sagebrush flatlands in between from being ruined by development, John D. Rockefeller Jr., purchased the JY Ranch, along with many other ranches in Jackson Hole in the 1920s and 1930s.³⁶ Rockefeller donated 32,000 acres of this land to the federal government that were included in the Jackson Hole National Monument that was created in 1943, but kept the JY Ranch for the private use of his family. This Ranch, located by Phelps Lake, is the last of the land inside GTNP still owned by the Rockefeller family. The JY Ranch grazes up to 25 horses for the exclusive use of the Rockefeller family on 530 acres of land on the east side of the Moose-Wilson Road. The Rockefeller family recently notified the NPS that the summer of 2003 was the last year they would use their grazing permit and they will donate the JY Ranch to GTNP in 2006.

Jackson Hole Hereford Ranch—The Porter Estate owns the 895-acre Jackson Hole Hereford Ranch south of Jackson, Wyoming, and six miles south of GTNP. Provisions of the 1950

³⁴ Maughan, Ralph. 2002. Teton Pack kills a heifer: Wolf control is ordered, but then dropped after heavy snow. November 18, 2002. Viewed at the website of Ralph Maughan’s Wildlife Reports, found at: www.forwolves.org/ralph/teton-pack-closecall.htm on February 13, 2004.

³⁵ Division of Science and Resource Management, Grand Teton National Park. 2000. Draft Biological Assessment Threatened and Endangered Species for Reissuance of Grazing Permits in Grand Teton National Park. Page 10. March 15, 2000.

³⁶ These purchases were made through the Snake River Land Company.

legislation to expand GTNP authorized the renewal of grazing permits for ranchlands outside the Park boundaries for a period of 25 years, and thereafter during the lifetime of the person possessing such grazing permits and the lifetime of his or her heirs, successors, or assigns who were immediate family members at the time. In 1995, Jackson Hole Hereford Ranch lost its grazing privileges when its designated heir to the Park grazing permit died. Family members have said eliminating Park grazing would force them to develop their ranches.

According to conservationist George Wuerthner:

Several alternatives to subdivision have been rejected by [the Mead/Hansen Ranch and Jackson Hole Hereford Ranch] including the opportunity to graze on other public or even private lands outside of the park, as well as the offer to buy up the development rights to the ranches. These were soundly rejected by the families who continue to blackmail the public with their threats to subdivide.

One has to put these threats into perspective. Some 97% of Teton County is public land. Even if every last acre of private land were developed, there would be a tremendous amount of undeveloped open space in the county. Both of these ranches are on the edge of Jackson that is already highly modified wildlife habitat. Though their loss to subdivisions might be regrettable, they are not key wildlife corridors or habitat. Furthermore, the major impact on most of the private land and nearly all of the public land, not only in GTNP but on the surrounding National Forest lands continues to be livestock grazing...³⁷

This threat of development moved Congress to pass legislation in 1997 extending grazing privileges to the Porter Estate and requiring the NPS to study whether allowing park grazing to continue would preserve open space in Jackson Hole.³⁸ In 2003, the Porter Estate requested a one-year non-use permit. According to the NPS, three years of non-use will result in the permanent loss of their grazing privileges.³⁹ In a March 23, 2004, letter to the Superintendent of GTNP, the Porter Estate announced they would resume grazing in the summer of 2004.⁴⁰ Ultimately, NPS's recommendations to Congress on the open space study will play a large role in determining whether grazing will continue on this allotment.

Regardless of what the NPS recommends to Congress, it is unlikely the Porter Estate will continue grazing the Park far into the future. It may be possible for the Porter Estate to continue to scratch out a living grazing livestock; however, in Teton County, where land may sell for up to \$500,000 an acre, the Jackson Hole Hereford Ranch is much more valuable as real estate development. With this in mind, the Porter Estate has been searching for ways to develop its property, including an attempt in 2002 to have the town of Jackson annex 822 acres and zone it

³⁷ Wuerthner, George. Undated. Grand Teton Threatened By Continued Livestock Grazing. Viewed at the website of the Buffalo Field Campaign, found at: www.wildrockies.org/Buffalo/politk99/tetonmoo.html, on April 16, 2004.

³⁸ National Park Service. 2000. Short Term Continued Grazing in Grand Teton National Park: Environmental Assessment. Page 1. Published by U.S. Department of Interior, National Park Service. March 2000.

³⁹ Huntington, Rebecca. Article: Hereford herds skip park visit this time. Page 2A in the Jackson Hole News&Guide. May 28, 2003.

⁴⁰ Huntington, Rebecca. 2004. Article: Cows to come home to Grand Teton Park. Page 28A in the Jackson Hole News&Guide. March 31, 2004.

for residential and commercial development. Having been unsuccessful in this effort, it is unclear what direction the Porter Estate will take next to develop its property. One thing is certain—grazing cows on land valued at a half million dollars an acre is unlikely to continue much longer. Moreover, once the base property is sold, the Porter Estate will permanently lose its grazing privileges in the Park.

Teton Valley Ranch—This 151-acre private ranch is located outside the Park near the town of Kelly on the south side of the Gros Ventre River. In 1949, the Snake River Land Company granted a lifetime grazing lease of 503 acres on the north side of the Gros Ventre River east of Kelly and on Kelly Hill to the owner of the Teton Valley Ranch and his/her two children. The 503 acres were subsequently donated to the NPS, subject to the lease. Today, the Teton Valley Ranch is owned by Phil, Wendell, and Mary Ellen Wilson. Much of this land, is irrigated, hayed, and grazed by longhorns.⁴¹ Because the leased land is not permitted by the Park, it does not set the conditions of the grazing privileges (season of use, # of AUMs, etc.) and, consequently, knows little of what occurs on this portion of Park land. In February of 2004, the Teton Valley Ranch was listed for sale for \$37,000,000.⁴² If/when this ranch is sold, the grazing rights will expire.

Wyoming State Section Lessee—The State of Wyoming owns 1,366 acres within GTNP.⁴³ In 2003, Earl and Howard Hardeman leased one of these Sections of State land that is located one mile north and one mile east of Kelly. Under their permit, 343 AUMs were harvested—215 AUMs from grazing 546 acres and 128 AUMs from haying 68 acres. Wyoming charged \$4.13 per AUM for the permit, for a total of \$1,417. The Wyoming Office of State Lands & Investments has no record of the number of livestock that graze this State Section.⁴⁴ Earl Hardeman died in 2003; Howard is believed to be in his 80s. This makes it unlikely the Hardeman family will continue to lease this land for grazing for many more years. Adding to the likelihood that grazing will be discontinued in the future, the 1,366 acres of Wyoming State land in the Park were included in legislation passed by Congress on June 17, 2003, to become Park property. Negotiations between Wyoming and the Federal government for a land exchange or purchase will have to take place before the land is transferred to the Park. Once the land is acquired by the NPS, grazing will cease. Although this Wyoming State Section of land near Kelly may be grazed in 2004, grazing will most likely end on this pasture within a few years. Ending grazing on this State Section will benefit elk, bison, and mule deer by improving the health of the land in an area that is important winter range for these species.

⁴¹ Division of Science and Resource Management, Grand Teton National Park. 2000. Draft Biological Assessment Threatened and Endangered Species for Reissuance of Grazing Permits in Grand Teton National Park. Page 10. March 15, 2000.

⁴² Sotheby's International Realty, Jackson Hole Brokerage. 2004. Viewed at the website of Sotheby's International Realty, found at: <http://jacksonhole.sothebysrealty.com/>, on February 5, 2004.

⁴³ National Park Service. 1989. Statement of Management: Grand Teton National Park. Page 30. United States Department of Interior – National Park Service. October 1989.

⁴⁴ Price, Carol. 2004. Personal communication, email to Robin Smith from Carol Price, Lands Management Specialist, Wyoming Office of State Lands & Investments. February 4, 2004.



THE FUTURE OF LIVESTOCK GRAZING IN GRAND TETON NATIONAL PARK

What does the future hold for grazing in GTNP? According to the Master Plan, one of the Park's management objectives is:

To manage the biotic resources of the park for the purpose of perpetuating the indigenous plant and animal associations of the Teton Range and Jackson Hole, in a condition of as nearly natural dynamic equilibrium as feasible.⁴⁵

NPS Management Policy states:

Commercial grazing or stock driveways will be allowed only in those [national] parks where (1) they are specifically authorized by federal law, (2) they were retained as a reserved right arising from NPS land acquisition, or (3) they are necessary to maintain the historic scene. Grazing and stock driveways will be eliminated in all other parks... Grazing will be managed and conducted in accordance with standards and procedures designed to ensure that it does not result in significant damage to park resources.

Where grazing or livestock trailing is otherwise allowed but its continuation would conflict with public enjoyment of park resources or would interfere with the functions of the natural ecosystem, the National Park Service will eliminate grazing whenever possible, through orderly and cooperative procedures with the individuals or organizations concerned.⁴⁶

How does this apply to GTNP? The enabling legislation that established the Park envisioned discontinuing grazing over time. According to the NPS, the 1950 legislation authorizing grazing includes termination language; consequently, grazing in the Park is not a reserved right held in perpetuity.⁴⁷ Therefore, continued grazing in GTNP for an indefinite period of time would require:

- (1) the passage of legislation by Congress permanently authorizing grazing in the Park; or
- (2) a determination by the NPS that grazing in GTNP is consistent with the purposes for which the Park was established. To make this determination, grazing would have to meet these tests: (1) it can be accomplished without significant damage to the Park's resources or the natural functioning of the ecosystem; and (2) it is beneficial to the public and contributes to the public's enjoyment of the Park.⁴⁸

Arguments can be made that with a Republican-controlled Congress and Republican President it is possible that legislation permanently authorizing grazing in GTNP could be passed. It is also

⁴⁵ National Park Service. 1976. Master Plan for Grand Teton National Park. Page 32.

⁴⁶ National Park Service. 2000. Short Term Continued Grazing in Grand Teton National Park, Environmental Assessment. Appendix B: Policy Framework, Including GTNP's Master Plan and NPS Policy Guidance. Published by the U.S. Department of Interior, National Park Service, Grand Teton National Park. March 2000.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

possible that President Bush could unilaterally order the NPS to make the administrative determination that grazing in GTNP is consistent with the purposes for which the Park was established. Nonetheless, with little to be gained politically, it is doubtful either of these two actions will occur. Assuming neither Congress nor the President intervenes, Table 3 summarizes the likelihood of each permittee grazing in the Park in the future.

Table 3 LIKELIHOOD OF GRAZING IN THE PARK IN THE FUTURE	
Moosehead Ranch	Grazing of horses will continue in the long-term
Pinto Ranch	Grazing will continue until GTNP acquires the inholding or purchases a conservation easement on the property
Triangle X Ranch	Grazing of horses will continue in the long-term
JY Ranch	2003 was last year for grazing
Jackson Hole Hereford Ranch	Grazing will likely end within 5 - 10 years
Teton Valley Ranch	Grazing will likely end within 2 – 3 years
Wyoming State Section Lessee	Grazing will likely end within 2 – 3 years

As shown in Table 3, it is anticipated that grazing will end by three entities within the next couple of years. This is because the summer of 2003 was the last summer for grazing by the JY Ranch; grazing by Teton Valley Ranch will end when this property is sold; and grazing will end on the Wyoming State Section upon acquisition of the property by the NPS. It is also likely that Jackson Hole Hereford Ranch will develop their land south of Jackson in the next 5 – 10 years. When this occurs, they will have to relinquish their grazing permit.

Consequently, livestock grazing will likely decline in the next decade until just three permittees remain—Moosehead Ranch, Pinto Ranch, and Triangle X Ranch. At that time, 686 animals will be permitted to harvest 1,381 AUMs while grazing 13,726 acres, or 4 percent of the Park.

Dude ranching and preservation of the historic scene is one of the purposes for which GTNP was established.⁴⁹ By providing overnight guest accommodations in historic dude ranches and horseback trail rides in the Park, Moosehead Ranch and Triangle X Ranch help fulfill this Park purpose. As such, it is likely the NPS will continue to permit these, or some other concessionaires, to graze horses in GTNP well into the future.

However, if the NPS wanted to eliminate grazing from Triangle X Ranch it could be accomplished very easily. Since this ranch is on Park property and operates under a Park concessions contract, the NPS has the authority to renegotiate the contract requiring Triangle X to truck in feed for the horses. Thus, with the stroke of a pen the NPS could end the grazing of

⁴⁹ Division of Science and Resource Management, Grand Teton National Park. 2000. Draft Biological Assessment Threatened and Endangered Species for Reissuance of Grazing Permits in Grand Teton National Park. Page 6. March 15, 2000.

120 horses on 1,800 acres of Park property.

To eliminate grazing by Moosehead Ranch, the NPS would have three possible courses of action:

- (1) Acquire the property as allowed in the 1950 Park expansion act. Unfortunately, the cost of purchasing Moosehead's 120 acres may be higher than the NPS can afford to pay (see the discussion about the cost of acquiring Pinto Ranch on page 21).
- (2) Discontinue issuing horse trail riding concessions permit. Without a concession permit, Moosehead Ranch would have little reason to maintain a large number of horses on their ranches. The resulting reduction in horses could lead them to voluntarily relinquish their grazing permit since they would no longer need grazing pastures in the Park. However, with their income potential reduced, Moosehead could threaten to develop their property in a way that would be detrimental to GTNP. This threat of development would likely ensure that neither the trail riding concessions permit nor the grazing permit would be cancelled.
- (3) Cancel the grazing permits and require the ranch to truck in feed for their horses. This decision could be based on the: (a) negative environmental impacts of livestock on the Park that are inconsistent with the National Park Service Act of 1916; (b) GTNP's Management Plan; and (c) NPS Management Policy.

None of these three seem likely to happen, however. It is more likely the Park will allow grazing to continue based on the pretext that preservation of dude ranching and trail riding is one of the purposes for which GTNP was established—despite the fact that both can be maintained without grazing on Park property.

Pinto Ranch will also continue grazing cattle in the Park, at least in the short-term, because the NPS currently does not have the impetus or money to acquire the inholding. The long-term future of livestock grazing in the Park by Pinto Ranch, however, is more uncertain. Their cattle graze in an area that is increasingly being utilized by expanding grizzly bear and wolf populations. According to the NPS:

Home ranges of 27 radio-collared [grizzly] bears from 1975 to 1998 have included parts of Grand Teton and the John D. Rockefeller Jr. Memorial Parkway.

... Grizzly bear/human conflicts in [allotments in the northern part of the GTNP] have been limited to livestock depredations. From 1994 to 1999, 41 incidents of livestock depredation were documented on the northern pastures. Confined to the Elk Ranch and Spread Creek areas, these depredations included 3 killed cows, 4 injured calves, and 34 killed calves.⁵⁰

The Spread Creek grazing allotment is located directly south and adjacent to Pinto Ranch, while

⁵⁰ National Park Service. 2001. Grazing Use and Open Space Study and Environmental Analysis: Grand Teton National Park, Teton County, Wyoming. Page 35. Published by the U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, Grand Teton National Park. April 1, 2001.

the Elk Ranch grazing allotments are just one mile away to the southwest. On Bridger-Teton National Forest's Blackrock/Spread Creek allotment,⁵¹ which is located just to the east and southeast of Pinto Ranch, there were 108 grizzly bear attacks on cattle from 1992 – 1998.⁵²

On at least three occasions between 1993 and 1995, a radio-collared male grizzly killed livestock on grazing allotments near the Pinto Ranch in GTNP and the Blackrock allotment on the Bridger-Teton National Forest. Twice this bear was captured and relocated to northern Yellowstone National Park (1993 and 1995). Both times, he made his way back to the northern part of GTNP and the nearby National Forest. The second time this bear returned to his home range was in the spring of 1996. In early July, he killed cattle on GTNP grazing pastures. After killing 11 head of cattle on the Park's Elk Ranch and Spread Creek grazing allotments over a three-week period, he was captured on the Elk Ranch grazing allotment and euthanized.⁵³

The effort to restore wolves to Yellowstone National Park began in the winter of 1994 – 1995. Within two years, some of these wolves had moved south to GTNP and were utilizing the area where the Pacific Creek grazing allotment is located. Spread Creek and Uhl Hill grazing allotments, which border Pinto Ranch, and the Elk Ranch allotment a mile or two away, have also been utilized extensively by wolves. As mentioned previously, five wolf dens have been found within a just few miles of Pinto Ranch. In recent years, wolves have expanded their territory in Jackson Hole as far south as the National Elk Refuge.

Along with territorial expansion came the first reported depredation when a cow was killed by a wolf in GTNP in 2002, on the Jackson Hole Hereford Ranch allotment.⁵⁴ In November 2002, up to four wolves from the Teton Pack, which raises its pups at a den site near a livestock grazing allotment in the Park, were targeted for elimination by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife service. According to Steve Cain, Acting Chief of the Park's Science and Resource Management Division, "Killing a few wolves is in the best interest of the pack as a whole."⁵⁵

What are the implications of the increasing presence of grizzly bears and wolves in and around the Pinto Ranch and its Park grazing allotment? In the past decade, cattle grazing has been a contentious issue with conservationists arguing that wildlife should take priority over livestock in a national park. Under the terms and conditions for grazing permits, permittees may take "non-injurious harassment action" against wolves in the immediate vicinity of their livestock.⁵⁶ If GTNP Acting Chief of Science and Resource Management's statement above is any indication of Park policy, one can expect that increased depredation by predators will result in wolves

⁵¹ The Forest Service retired 74,200 acres of this 87,500 acre allotment in 2003 after the permittee accepted \$250,000 from a coalition of conservation and hunting groups to give up their permit and quit grazing this area.

⁵² Huntington, Rebecca. 2003. Article: Waltons cease grazing Togwotee Pass. Page 34A of Jackson Hole News&Guide. Wednesday, August 6, 2003.

⁵³ Division of Science and Resource Management, Grand Teton National Park. 2000. Draft Biological Assessment Threatened and Endangered Species for Reissuance of Grazing Permits in Grand Teton National Park. Pages 19 and 21. March 15, 2000.

⁵⁴ Ibid., pages 21 and 22.

⁵⁵ Huntington, Rebecca. 2002. Service pulls traps set for Teton Pack. Page 28A. *Jackson Hole News&Guide*. November 20, 2002.

⁵⁶ National Park Service. 2000. Short Term Continued Grazing in Grand Teton National Park, Environmental Assessment. Appendix E. Published by the U.S. Department of Interior, National Park Service, Grand Teton National Park. March 2000.

and/or grizzlies being harassed, relocated, or euthanized in an attempt to ameliorate the situation for permittees. This could create an angry backlash from the public because most Americans do not believe grizzly bears and wolves should be killed to protect cows grazing in a national park.

Increased livestock depredations, followed by the killing of bears and wolves, could result in the public demanding the NPS acquire Pinto Ranch's inholding and retire the grazing privileges in the Park as envisioned in the 1950 Park expansion legislation. For this to occur there are two hurdles to overcome. First, the owners of Pinto Ranch must be willing sellers, since it is highly unlikely the NPS would use eminent domain to acquire the property (and the 1950 legislation does not require the owners of inholdings to sell their property). Second, the NPS must come up with the money to buy the property. As mentioned, previously, the asking price for the 151-acre Teton Valley Ranch is \$37 million. The asking price for a 1/5 interest in the 450-acre "Ranches at Spring Creek," just outside of the town of Jackson, is \$25 million. This would make the asking price for the entire Ranches at Spring Creek (which is the same size as Pinto Ranch) \$125 million. In 2002, properties in Teton County sold for approximately 93 percent of the asking price. Using these two properties for comparison, and assuming the fair-market price⁵⁷ is 93% of the asking price, it seems likely the price to purchase the Pinto Ranch would be at least \$34 million and perhaps as high as \$116 million. To put this into perspective, \$116 million would be enough money to fund GTNP's annual operating budget of \$9.4 million⁵⁸ for more than twelve years! This amount is so high it appears the door to this option may have been closed years ago.

A less costly option would be for the NPS to pay Pinto Ranch to give up their grazing permit so that it could be permanently retired. Based on current proposed legislation in Congress, it would cost approximately \$92,000 to buyout Pinto Ranch's 525/AUMs.⁵⁹ To prevent the Ranch from being developed, the NPS would also have to purchase the development rights by placing a conservation easement on the inholding. Based on the costs of easements over the past two years and assuming the allowable development ranged from 3 or 4 home sites to a total prohibition on construction, the cost to purchase conservation easements on the Pinto Ranch would range somewhere in the neighborhood of \$11 million to \$30 million.⁶⁰ Thus, the low range cost estimate of a grazing permit buyout combined with the purchase of a conservation easement on the Pinto Ranch would be approximately \$11.1 million dollars.

With the price tag for both of these options (acquiring the property or purchasing conservation easements) so high and little on-going controversy over grazing on the Pacific Creek Allotment, it is unlikely the NPS will voluntarily move to end grazing in the Park by the Pinto Ranch in the near future. This could change quickly, however, if numerous livestock depredations occur and wildlife agencies kill high numbers of grizzlies and wolves to protect cows grazing in the Park.

⁵⁷ By law, the federal government cannot pay higher than the fair-market price to purchase a property.

⁵⁸ National Park Service. Undated. Grand Teton National Park Facts. Viewed at the website of the National Park Service, found at: www.nps.gov/grte/pphtml/facts.html, on May 15, 2004.

⁵⁹ The Voluntary Grazing Permit Buyout Act (H.R. 3324) was introduced in Congress on October 16, 2003. If passed, this legislation would pay \$175/AUM to ranchers who are willing to permanently give up their grazing permits on publicly owned land.

⁶⁰ Lindstrom, Tim. 2004. Personal communication, phone interview with Tom Lindstrom, Director of Protection and Staff Attorney, Jackson Hole Land Trust. March 2, 2004.

OTHER NEGATIVE IMPACTS OF GRAZING

Many of the negative impacts of grazing identified in the Environmental Assessment are described on pages 8 - 10 of this report, while impacts to grizzly bears and wolves are discussed on pages 19 - 21. This section describes some of the other negative impacts that have not yet been discussed in this report.

While negative impacts to wildlife receive most of the attention, grazing has also been responsible for impairing native plants. Much of the area within the Park's livestock grazing pastures was homesteaded in the late 19th and early 20th century. Homesteaders introduced non-native grasses in the 1890s, resulting in plant communities that are significantly different today than they would have been without human activities. The areas that were farmed and irrigated the longest show little recovery of native species and are the sites of some of the largest noxious weed infestations in the Park.⁶¹

Weed invasions reduce the diversity and quantity of native plants by modifying habitat—replacing a grass community with forbs, for example. Studies have shown that weed infestations such as those on Park grazing allotments can reduce available winter forage for elk by as much as 50 to 90 percent. Bison and deer use of habitat infested with Leafy Spurge has been reported to be 70 to 82 percent lower than non-infested habitat.⁶² For wildlife, this problem is compounded by the fact that after noxious weeds have taken over a pasture the scarce native plant vegetation that remains is eaten by domestic livestock.

In an attempt to raise cattle in the arid climate of Jackson Hole, ranchers have altered the flow of local rivers and streams. All told there are 67 privately held water rights with points of diversion and/or means of conveyance and/or irrigated land within the boundaries of the park.⁶³ These water diversions have created a number of problems in the Park. In the summer months, portions of numerous drainages, particularly Spread Creek, Ditch Creek, Granite Creek, and the Gros Ventre River, are often depleted of water. This results in negative impacts on the aquatic and riparian communities in these areas. The depletion of these streams is due mostly to diversion of water for irrigation for livestock.⁶⁴ According to the NPS:

Grand Teton National Park is host to an extensive network of irrigation systems, located primarily in the northeastern and southern areas of the Park. Due to the large amount of water diverted, these systems play a large part in the amount of aquatic habitat available for use in the late summer and fall months. In general, the amount of water diverted for irrigation use is more than legally adjudicated.

⁶¹ National Park Service. 2000. Short Term Continued Grazing in Grand Teton National Park, Environmental Assessment. Page 31. Published by the U.S. Department of Interior, National Park Service, Grand Teton National Park. March 2000.

⁶² Jackson Hole Weed Management Association. Undated. Brochure: Noxious Weeds Threatening Jackson Hole's Native Plants and Wildlife. Published by a collaboration of private organizations and local, state, and federal agencies.

⁶³ National Park Service. 1989. Statement of Management: Grand Teton National Park. Page 8. United States Department of Interior – National Park Service. October 1989.

⁶⁴ National Park Service. 2000. Short Term Continued Grazing in Grand Teton National Park, Environmental Assessment. Page 27. Published by the U.S. Department of Interior, National Park Service, Grand Teton National Park. March 2000.

Water is diverted from Spread Creek during the summer months to irrigate 2,300 acres of lands within the Park. Only 55 of these acres are privately owned. The lands irrigated include the East Elk Ranch allotment and Moosehead Ranch. The water used to irrigate the Elk Ranch is diverted at the Spread Creek Dam, flows across the Spread Creek, Uhl Hill, East Elk Ranch, and West Elk Ranch Pastures, and drains into the Snake River. Water is also diverted at the Spread Creek Dam to provide water to the Moosehead Ranch and Triangle X. In addition, Spread Creek itself flows across the Moosehead Flats pasture, and is used for livestock water and irrigation. Spread Creek eventually empties into the Snake River.

Much of the water [from the Gros Ventre River] flows through canals across the Park and onto private lands with formal water rights. Although some of these adjacent private lands have been developed into subdivisions, the amount of water diverted has not been decreased. This river has been intensively and increasingly dewatered over the years. In 1988, the river's flow was reduced to a small trickle between the Wyoming Highway 26/89/191 bridge to its confluence with the Snake River, a distance of about 3 miles. Very little water flowed for 6 miles upstream.

In addition, some of the water is diverted in order to provide stock water to cattle grazing on the South Gros Ventre pasture [Jackson Hole Hereford Ranch]. This irrigation ditch flows from east to west across the South Gros Ventre pasture, and is the main source of livestock water.⁶⁵

Compounding the naturally arid climate, Jackson Hole has experienced a severe drought the past couple of years. With less grass available due to the drought, little is left for wildlife to eat after cattle have grazed an area.

The most recent range analysis conducted by the Park of some of the grazing allotments took place in 2001. The purpose of this study was to assess the effects of the drought on forage availability for cattle and wildlife. This analysis looked at eight of the Park's 24 grazing pastures. These eight allotments comprise 9,522 acres, or 34 percent, of the 28,022 acres in allotments.⁶⁶

According to this study, cattle from the Jackson Hole Hereford ranch ate between 76 to 90 percent of available plant material in their grazing allotment surrounding Blacktail Butte in 2001. After a few days of cattle grazing on the irrigated part of the East Elk Ranch grazing allotment, Jackson Hole Hereford Ranch's cattle had eaten from 60 to 80 percent of available forage. Conventional wisdom by range managers in the western states suggests a 50 percent offtake rate is a reasonable, sustainable goal for most native grasslands. Research has found that more intense grazing of native grasses, such as the levels seen on grazing allotments in GTNP is not sustainable. The reduction of forage by cattle in pasture areas, which are utilized by elk and

⁶⁵ National Park Service. 2000. Short Term Continued Grazing in Grand Teton National Park, Environmental Assessment. Pages 27 and 28. Published by the U.S. Department of Interior, National Park Service, Grand Teton National Park. March 2000.

⁶⁶ The 7,291 acres used for trailing and the 613 acres of grazed Wyoming State land are not included in this calculation.

bison, could increase the use of other non-allotment areas of the Park by elk and bison beyond sustainable levels of grazing.⁶⁷

One of negative impacts of livestock grazing that is rarely discussed is the political influence of grazing permittees. As on all publicly owned lands, federal land managers seem to be more eager to please a few permittees than to represent the millions of Americans who pay their salaries and own the land upon which the cattle graze. The Jackson Hole Conservation Alliance gives this example:

[O]ver the past few years some representatives of the conservation groups have gone out in early to mid-May with the Vegetation Management Specialist to check on the conditions of the range. In both cases, the Vegetation Management Specialist admitted that the range was not quite "ready" but that the permittees were used to a mid-May turn-on date and that, politically, he didn't think the Park could delay the turn-on date for more than a week. This decision was clearly not about the needs of the vegetative resources but the needs of the permittee.⁶⁸

The last of the negative impacts of livestock grazing that needs mentioning is the construction of fences surrounding grazing pastures. According to Franz Camenzind of the Jackson Hole Conservation Alliance, there are at least 100 miles of fence in the Park interfering with wildlife's ability to move freely.⁶⁹

Because of all the negative impacts resulting from livestock grazing, environmental organizations such as the Greater Yellowstone Coalition and Jackson Hole Conservation Alliance have joined with the public in calling for an end to cattle grazing in the GTNP so the habitat may be managed for native wildlife.

THE COSTS OF LIVESTOCK GRAZING TO AMERICAN TAXPAYERS

How much does it cost U.S. taxpayers to lease GTNP for grazing? Fiscal year 1999 is the most recent year the NPS has calculated the cost of livestock grazing. A total of \$62,642 was spent on the grazing program during this year.⁷⁰ However, this figure omits many costs. For instance, under the terms and conditions for grazing permits, GTNP is responsible for constructing and maintaining fences along the perimeter of many of the allotments.⁷¹ In fulfillment of this

⁶⁷ Zeigenfuss, Linda, Francis Singer, Michael Rock, and Tom Hobbs. 2001. Assessment of the Effects of the Drought of 2001 on Forage Production and Use by Wild Ungulates and Cattle in Grand Teton National Park. Page 2. U.S. Geological Survey, Biological Resources Division, Mid Continent Ecological Science Center and Colorado State University, Natural Resources Ecology Lab. Report to Grand Teton National Park. August 23, 2001.

⁶⁸ Lichtman, Pamela, and Steve Thomas. 2000. Letter to Jack Neckels, Superintendent, Grand Teton National Park from Pamela Lichtman, Jackson Hole Conservation Alliance and Steve Thomas, Greater Yellowstone Coalition. April 19, 2000.

⁶⁹ Camenzind, Franz. 2003. Personal communication, phone interview with Franz Camenzind, Executive Director, Jackson Hole Conservation Alliance. September 23, 2003.

⁷⁰ National Park Service. Undated. FY 99 Grazing Program expenditures. Page 1. Unpublished document obtained by Forest Guardians from Grand Teton National Park through a February 20, 2003, Freedom of Information Act request.

⁷¹ National Park Service. 2000. Short Term Continued Grazing in Grand Teton National Park, Environmental Assessment. Appendix E. Published by the U.S. Department of Interior, National Park Service, Grand Teton National Park. March 2000.

agreement, the Park has constructed at least 100 miles of fence. At an average cost of \$3,000 per linear mile for barbed wire fence,⁷² the cost to construct fencing for livestock is estimated to be \$30,000.⁷³ Amortized over twenty years this is an annual cost of \$1,500 per year.⁷⁴

In 2000 and 2001, GTNP completed the following grazing-related studies:

- *Short Term Continued Grazing in Grand Teton National Park—Environmental Assessment*;
- *Draft Biological Assessment Threatened and Endangered Species for Reissuance of Grazing Permits in Grand Teton National Park*;
- *Grazing Use and Open Space Study and Environmental Analysis*; and
- *Assessment of the Effects of the Drought of 2001 on Forage Production and Use by Wild Ungulates and Cattle in Grand Teton National Park*.

Unfortunately, the full costs to prepare, publish, and distribute these reports will never be known. According to the Park, no costs can be assigned to the *Short Term Continued Grazing in Grand Teton National Park—Environmental Assessment*, which included the *Draft Biological Assessment Threatened and Endangered Species for Reissuance of Grazing Permits in Grand Teton National Park*, because:

This document was produced in-house by NPS staff as part of their regularly assigned duties. Due to the fact that they could be working on several reports at any given time, it would be impossible to break out specific costs for any one report.⁷⁵

The Park reports \$163,175 was spent on the *Grazing Use and Open Space Study and Environmental Analysis*. However, this amount does not include the salaries of NPS staff that worked on the project as part of their regular duties.

With regards to the last study—*Assessment of the Effects of the Drought of 2001 on Forage Production and Use by Wild Ungulates and Cattle in Grand Teton National Park*—the Park estimated the cost to be around \$4,000. Again, this amount does not include the salaries of staff involved in the report.⁷⁶

The known cost to prepare these four reports was \$167,175. However, this figure greatly underestimates the true costs of preparing these reports. Because all three are labor intensive to

⁷² Dehmer, Greg M. 2004. Personal communication, email message to Robin Smith from Greg M. Dehmer, Acting Refuge Manager, Red Rock Lakes National Wildlife Refuge. January 28, 2004.

⁷³ At least three types of fence have been constructed in GTNP: barbed wire; buck and rail; and temporary electric. Data is not available to ascertain the number of miles of each type. The cost estimate provided in this report is based on the cost of construction of barbed wire fence for the entire 100 miles.

⁷⁴ Costs have been amortized over 20 years, the approximate life of barbed-wire fence, in an attempt to fairly allocate annual costs.

⁷⁵ Wilts, Janet. 2004. Letter to Robin Smith from Janet Wilts, Acting Law Enforcement Specialist, Grand Teton National Park. March 26, 2004.

⁷⁶ Ibid.

produce, salaries represent the most expensive cost of production. Consequently, a more accurate, yet conservative, figure for the cost of all three reports that includes salaries would be closer to \$300,000. Amortized over three years (the approximate length of time to prepare these reports), the costs GTNP incurred to produce these reports is probably \$100,000 per year.

As can be seen in Figure 1, from 1998 – 2002, an average of \$7,711 was collected in grazing fees⁷⁷ while the average number of permitted AUMs was 6,489. Unlike grazing on some federal lands where a portion of the grazing fee is returned to local governments, there are no direct payments to the county that result from livestock grazing in the GTNP;⁷⁸ therefore, all fees collected from grazing in GTNP are retained in the Park.

Figure 1 AVERAGE AMOUNT OF FEES COLLECTED
& PERMITTED AUMS

<u>Year</u>	<u>Fees Collected</u>	<u>Permitted AUMs</u>
1998.....	\$ 9,052	7,277
1999.....	\$ 8,698	7,277
2000.....	\$ 10,472	7,277
2001.....	\$ 6,192	7,015
2002.....	\$ 4,142	3,601
AVERAGE	\$ 7,711	6,489

The figures above do not include grazing fees that may be collected by the Rockefeller family from the Teton Valley Ranch⁷⁹ or the \$1,417 collected from the lessee of the Wyoming State Section who is permitted to harvest 343 AUMs.⁸⁰ When \$1,417 is added to the GTNP figures, it appears that on average \$9,128 were collected annually as a grazing fee to harvest 6,832 AUMs.⁸¹ This comes to \$1.33 per AUM. Using the average figure of \$15.60 for leasing an AUM on private land in Wyoming in 2002,⁸² ranchers paying \$1.33 per AUM to graze their animals in GTNP are being subsidized at the rate of \$14.27 per AUM. The failure to charge market rates represents a loss in revenue to the U.S. treasury of \$97,493 per year. This entire amount of forgone revenue collection is private profit to the handful of grazing permit holders.

⁷⁷ National Park Service. Undated. Cattle Grazing Account. Page 1. Unpublished document obtained by Forest Guardians from Grand Teton National Park through a February 20, 2003, Freedom of Information Act request.

⁷⁸ National Park Service. 2000. Short Term Continued Grazing in Grand Teton National Park, Environmental Assessment. Page 44. Published by the U.S. Department of Interior, National Park Service, Grand Teton National Park. March 2000.

⁷⁹ The terms of this private agreement are unknown.

⁸⁰ These are 2003 figures.

⁸¹ Because grazing fees from Teton Valley Ranch are unknown and not included in the total used here, the 468 AUMs harvested by this ranch have also been excluded from the total figures. Including the known AUMs from Teton Valley Ranch without the grazing fee would skew the grazing cost per AUM calculation.

⁸² National Agricultural Statistics Service. Undated. 2002 – 2003 Statistical Highlights of U.S. Agriculture. Published by the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Viewed at the website of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, found at: <http://www.usda.gov/nass/pubs/stathigh/2003/tables/economics.htm#grazing>, on April 27, 2004.

It is not possible to calculate the actual costs of grazing in GTNP because many expenses are unknown. In fiscal year 1999, these unknown expenses included:

- maintenance of the Spread Creek diversion dam and Elk Ranch reservoir;
- fuel and maintenance of a Park owned truck used for irrigation and fencing;
- fuel and maintenance of a rental vehicle used by an employee who spent 80 percent of his time working on fences;
- salaries for Park staff who worked for several days on fences;
- the purchase of, maintenance, and fuel for a tractor used for post pounding and ditching; and
- the purchase of, maintenance, and fuel for two 4-wheel ATCs (All Terrain Cycle) used exclusively for irrigating and fencing.⁸³

By assigning dollar amounts to the unknown expenses listed in the bullet points above, it is possible to estimate the Park’s annual grazing expenditures. Figure 2 utilizes known expenditures from 1999, known average expenses over a three-year period, and estimates for expenses NPS data do not itemize. While a tractor and two ATCs will not be purchased every year (as was in 1999), it is likely that other equipment purchases will produce similar expenses each year. In other words, for this estimate, 1999 expenses are not considered an anomaly.

GTNP identified annual average grazing-related expenses	\$ 62,642
Fence construction expenditures amortized over 20 years	1,500
Known expenditures for grazing-related studies amortized over 3 years	55,725
Staff salaries for three grazing reports amortized over three years	44,275
Maintenance of Spread Creek dam and Elk Ranch reservoir	5,000
Fuel and maintenance of truck used for irrigation and fencing	1,000
Fuel, maintenance, and rental of vehicle used 80% of time for grazing	4,000
Salaries for Park staff who worked for several days on fences	1,300
Purchase, maintenance, and fuel for tractor	13,500
Purchase, maintenance, and fuel for two 4-wheel ATCs	+ 6,000
TOTAL	\$ 194,942

As can be seen from 1999 – 2001, GTNP incurred estimated expenditures of \$194,942 per year for administering the livestock-grazing program while taking in \$7,711 in grazing fees to pay for

⁸³ National Park Service. Undated. FY 99 Grazing Program Expenditures. Unpublished document obtained by Forest Guardians from Grand Teton National Park through a February 20, 2003, Freedom of Information Act request.

these expenditures. In other words, the grazing program operated in the red to the tune of \$187,231 annually (\$194,942 – \$7,711 = \$187,231). Two additional grazing-related expenses have not been included in this calculation because of the difficulty of estimating them. These include the expenses incurred by state and federal agencies (NPS, Fish and Wildlife Service, Wildlife Services, Forest Service, and Wyoming Game and Fish) to:

- (1) set traps, capture, radio-collar, and monitor the movements of wolves and grizzlies in and around GTNP for the protection of livestock; and
- (2) investigate livestock depredations in and around GTNP, set traps, capture (or attempt to capture), and relocate or euthanize wolves and grizzlies that have killed livestock.

Expenditures to monitor wolves and grizzlies to protect livestock grazing in the Park probably cost taxpayers tens of thousands of dollars annually.

Looking solely at expenditures does not provide the true cost to taxpayers for grazing in GTNP. To determine the true cost, the amount of revenue the Park failed to collect by charging below-market grazing fees (\$97,493) must be added to the estimated net expenditures (\$187,231). This calculation shows that U.S. taxpayers lose at least \$284,724 per year for the privilege of having livestock damage GTNP and eat forage intended for native wildlife. This represents a subsidy of at least \$31,636 per year for each of the nine permittees⁸⁴ grazing in the Park.

Our National Park System is experiencing budget shortfalls of \$600 million annually and has a \$5 billion backlog of projects that desperately need funding.⁸⁵ With its budget stretched beyond its capacity to address legitimate needs of our Parks, the NPS has stated that if livestock grazing is going to continue in GTNP over the long-term, then \$1 million needs to be spent to construct new fences and repair the outdated and deteriorating irrigation systems.⁸⁶ It is hard to imagine there could be a more egregious waste of taxes than spending scarce NPS dollars to allow the continued use of the Park in a manner that is incompatible with the purpose for which it was created.

CONCLUSION

Although livestock grazing in Grand Teton National Park has diminished since 1950, in 2004 six ranches are permitted to graze 1,755 animals while utilizing up to 35,832 acres, or 12 percent of the Park. Furthermore, their livestock are permitted to eat more than 3.5 million pounds of forage that should go to native wildlife. It really is a simple concept: the amount of forage eaten by domestic livestock is not available to wildlife as food or cover, therefore, reducing wildlife populations.

⁸⁴ The nine permittees used to calculate this subsidy includes the seven permittees shown in the table on page 9, plus the Moulton Ranch and Mead/Hansen Ranch, which discontinued grazing in 2001 and 2002, respectively.

⁸⁵ National Parks Conservation Association. Undated. About NPCA—NPCA's National Parks Defense Campaign. Viewed at the website of the National Parks Conservation Association, found at: <http://www.npca.org/about%5Fnpca/>, on April 27, 2004.

⁸⁶ National Park Service. 2001. Grazing Use and Open Space Study and Environmental Analysis: Grand Teton National Park, Teton County, Wyoming. Pages 68 - 71. Published by the U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, Grand Teton National Park. April 1, 2001.

While this grazing provides a prestigious lifestyle and private profit center for a privileged few, it provides no public benefits. To the contrary, it causes: dewatering of streams and destruction of riparian habitat; loss of native plant communities and infestations of noxious weeds; displacement of elk and bison on summer range and a decrease in forage availability in winter range; an increased potential for disease transmission from cattle to elk and bison; a decrease in small mammal and bird populations; grizzly bears and wolves to be harassed, captured, relocated, and/or euthanized; and lost opportunities for visitors to experience wildlife in a pristine, wild setting. Meanwhile, conservative estimates show U.S. taxpayers lose at least \$285,000 each year to perpetuate this tragedy.

Until recently, the NPS has pursued the phase-out of livestock grazing as evidenced by the fact that 25 of the original 31 permittees have relinquished their grazing privileges. Now it appears some of the remaining permittees may be holding the Park, Jackson Hole, and the public hostage by demanding their grazing privileges be continued or they will turn their private land over to real estate developers.

Today, we stand at a crossroads. Will a small number of elite ranchers continue using publicly owned land for their personal benefit or will grazing finally be phased out as intended and the land returned to the public domain? Will Park lands be managed as livestock feedgrounds or as pristine wild lands “unimpaired for future generations” as required by law? Will grizzlies and wolves be harassed, relocated, and killed to protect cows or will the Park finally become a wildlife sanctuary?

Grand Teton National Park is truly a unique and extraordinary place—one of the very few remaining places in the contiguous 48 states that contain all the species of wildlife that existed prior to the arrival of the first white settlers to Jackson Hole. To ensure Grand Teton remains one of our country’s crown jewels, the National Park Service must phase out livestock grazing as envisioned in the legislation that created the Park. Only then, will Americans feel confident that Grand Teton National Park is being managed “in such manner and by such means as will leave” it “unimpaired for future generations.”