



File Code: 1950/2200

Date: 12 December 2006

To Whom It May Concern:

The Roosevelt-Duchesne and Vernal Ranger Districts propose to reauthorize grazing on 6 allotments on the Ashley National Forest. Allotments from the two districts are being scoped together to enhance efficiency. The purpose and need for the proposed action is to comply with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) by determining the effects of livestock grazing on rangeland resources. The allotments listed in the table below are scheduled for and require NEPA analysis.

Allotment	District	Total Acres	Suitable Grazing Acres	Livestock Number-Class	Grazing Season	Grazing System
Antelope	D3	26,573	5,292	200 - cows	Dec. 1 - Mar. 23	Deferred Rotation
Anthro Mountain	D3	21,625	5,292	602 - cow/calf	June 1 - Oct. 16	Rest Rotation
Davenport Draw	D2	3,794	3,224	17 - cow/calf	July 6 - Sept. 5	On-Off
Jackson Draw	D2	491	221	5 - cow/calf	July 16 - Sept. 15	On-Off
Lambson Draw	D2	2,380	1,371	95 - ewe/lamb	June 10 - June 20 Sept. 8 - Sept. 25	On-Off
Pot Creek	D2	8,909	3,159	30 - cow/calf	June 1 - Oct. 31	On-Off

D2 - Vernal District; D3 - Roosevelt-Duchesne District

As a part of reauthorizing livestock grazing, the proposed action would incorporate an adaptive management strategy. The strategy was developed by an interdisciplinary team of resource specialists and is a planning and monitoring process that identifies desired resource conditions and establishes benchmarks and management standards that would maintain or move toward desired condition on 63,772 acres. The benchmarks identified below will form a basis for monitoring - to compare the allotment conditions with the specified benchmark. These would be incorporated within existing livestock grazing permits and revised Allotment Management Plans and would compliment existing Forest-wide standards and guidelines currently found therein.

- Total ground cover equal to or greater than 85% of potential for all plant communities grazed by livestock.
- Plant communities dominated by native species and selected non-native species of moderate to high value for watershed protection (or erosion control). Dominance includes greater cover, greater frequency, and/or greater abundance of moderate and high value plants than low value plants. Selected non-native species are those included in plantings in the past based on their erosion control and other desired values. This includes both woody and herbaceous species. Documentation associated with photography and other notes as well as measurements from studies are sources for determination of dominance.
- In goshawk habitat (forested lands, including transitory openings created by timber harvest or fire), limit understory grazing utilization to an average of 20% by weight, not to exceed 40% on any specific site. Average browse utilization would be limited to 40%



by weight, and would not exceed 60%. This standard does not apply to non-forested habitat types (Goshawk Strategy).

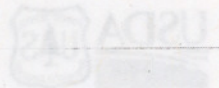
- Manage livestock grazing in aspen stands to facilitate sprouting and sprout survival sufficient to perpetuate the long-term viability of aspen clones. Crown cover of aspen sprouts 40% or greater at 5-years post disturbance.
- Utilization of key forage species no greater than 50% of current year's growth except where long-term monitoring demonstrates a different standard is appropriate.
- Leave a 4" or greater stubble height of herbaceous species at the end of the grazing season between greenline and bank full of perennial stream systems.
- Stream bank stability is equal to or greater than 80% of potential.
- Implement grazing management practices that would not cause exceedences in state water quality standards.

The District Ranger(s) will determine whether or not the decisions may be categorically excluded from further analysis following a review of specialist reports, biological evaluations/assessments, public comments, and other pertinent analyses. If the allotments qualify for categorical exclusion, it is the District Ranger's intention to issue Decision Memos for each of the identified grazing allotments under the approved authority granted the Forest Service by the U.S. Congress in Section 339 of the FY 2005 Consolidated Appropriations Act (P.L. 108-447). This legislation provides that certain decisions to authorize allotment grazing shall be categorically excluded (CE) from documentation in environmental assessments and environmental impact statements under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). The full text follows:

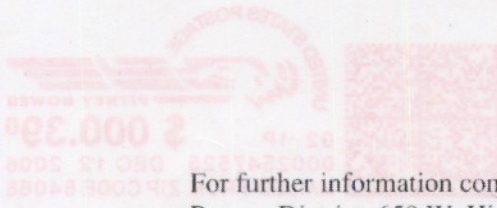
SEC. 339. For fiscal years 2005 through 2007, a decision made by the Secretary of Agriculture to authorize grazing on an allotment shall be categorically excluded from documentation in an environmental assessment or an environmental impact statement under the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (42 U.S.C. 4321 et seq.) if: (1) the decision continues current grazing management; (2) monitoring indicates that current grazing management is meeting, or satisfactorily moving toward, objectives in the land and resource management plan, as determined by the Secretary; and (3) the decision is consistent with agency policy concerning extraordinary circumstances. The total number of allotments that may be categorically excluded under this section may not exceed 900.

Decisions issued under the authority of Section 339 of the FY 2005 Consolidated Appropriations Act are not appealable under 36 CFR 215. Permittees may appeal this decision under 36 CFR 251.

The public is invited to offer comment at this time. Comments received in response to this notice, including names and addresses of those who comment, will be considered part of the public record for this project. Send your written comments to: John R. Kirkaldie, District Ranger, Roosevelt-Duchesne Ranger District, at 650 W. Highway 40, P.O. Box 127, Roosevelt, Utah 84066. Comments may also be hand delivered to the above address during regular business hours of 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday-Friday, excluding federal holidays; or submitted electronically to comments-intermtn-ashley@fs.fed.us. It would be most useful for the Forest to receive your electronic comments in MS Word (*.doc) or rich text format (*.rtf). All comments should be received by January 12, 2007.



Asst. National Forest
Duchesne Ranger District
PO Box 981
Duchesne, UT 84003



For further information concerning this proposal, please contact Allen Huber at the Roosevelt Ranger District, 650 W. Highway 40, P.O. Box 127 Roosevelt Utah 84066, by phone at (435) 781-5226, or by e-mail at ahuber@fs.fed.us.

Sincerely,

John R. Kirkaldie 12/11/06

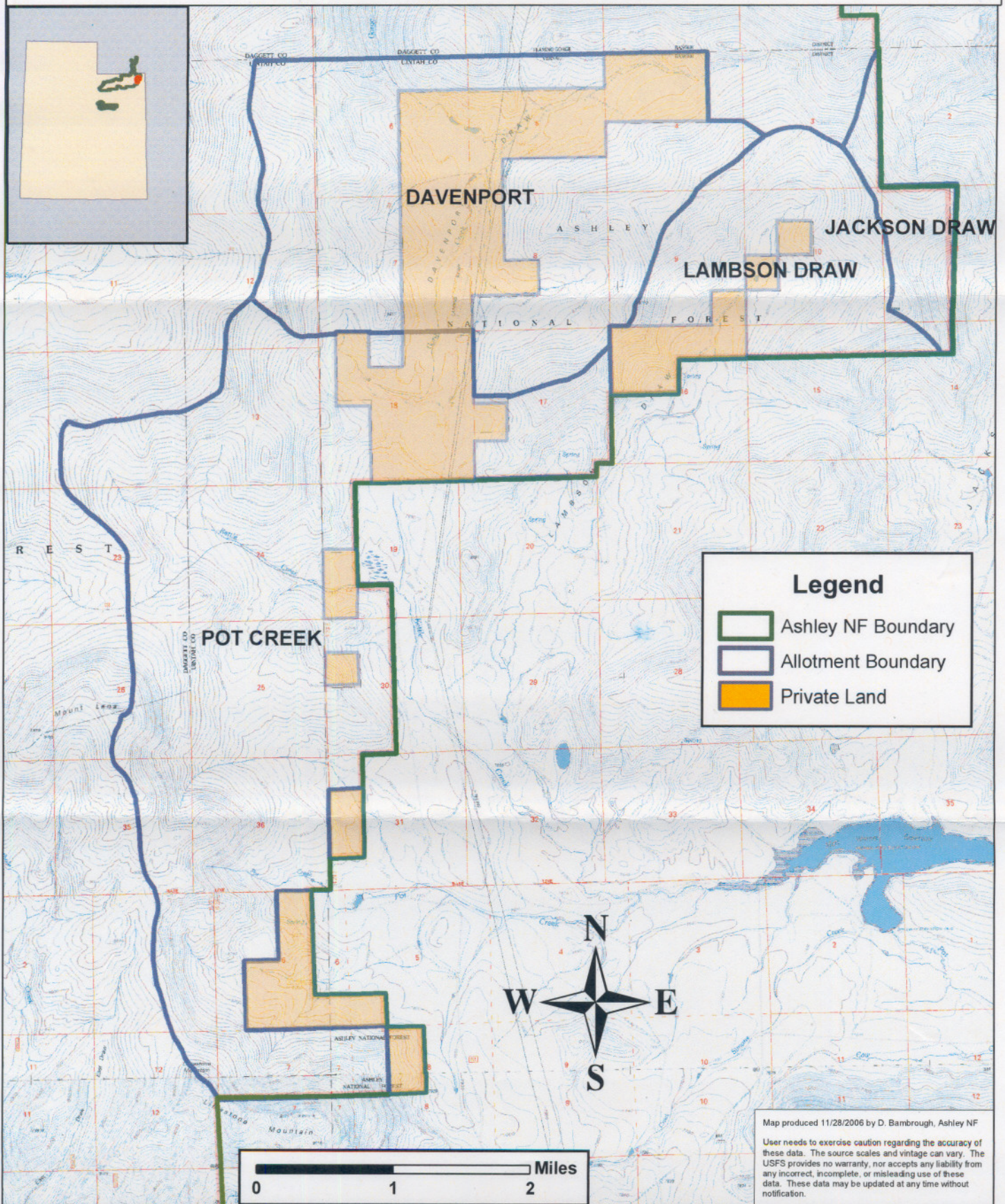
JOHN R. KIRKALDIE
Responsible Official
Roosevelt-Duchesne District Ranger

Mike T. Elson

MIKE T. ELSON
Responsible Official
Acting Vernal District Ranger




Enclosures

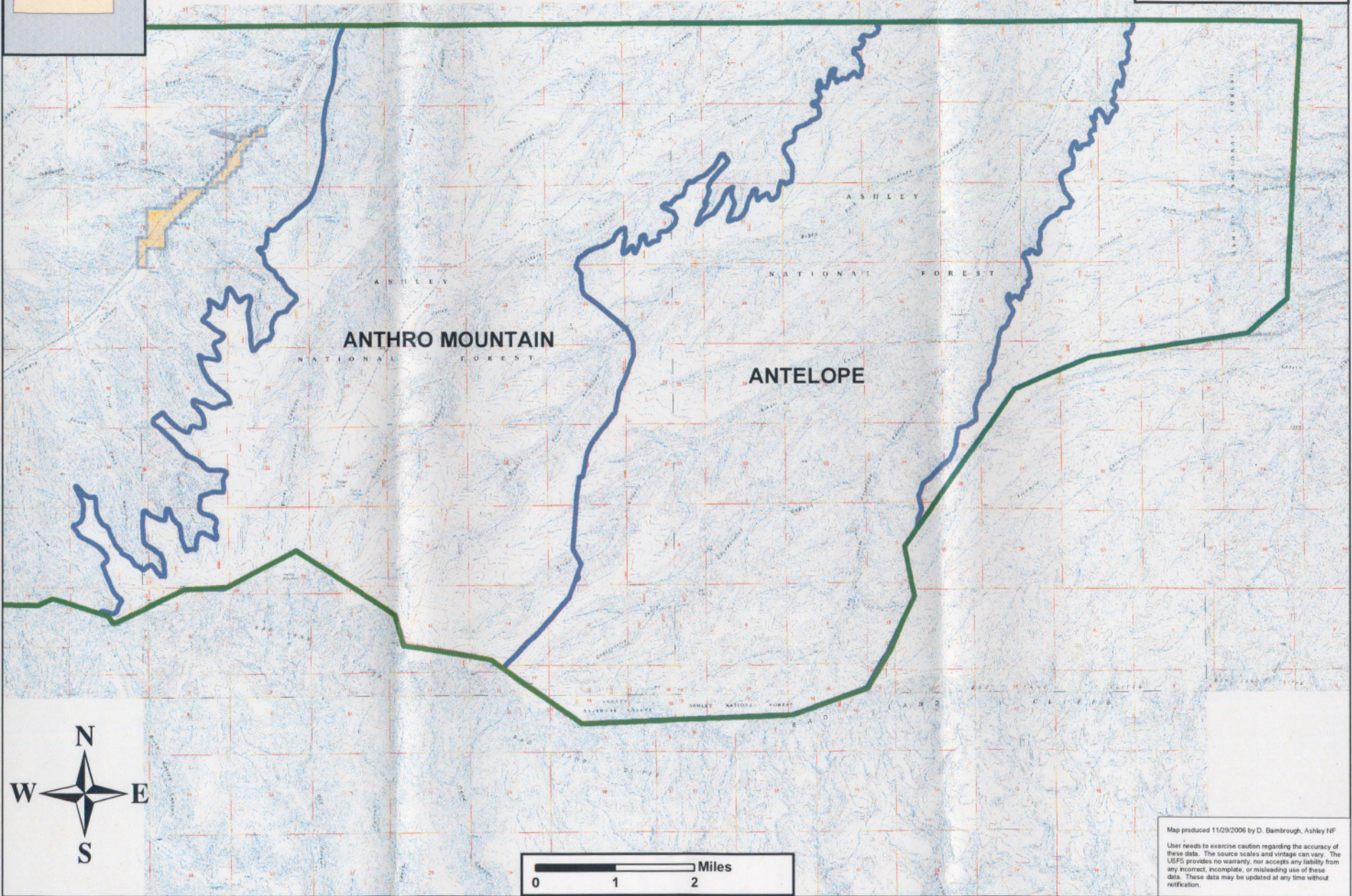
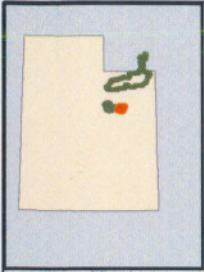
Davenport, Jackson Draw, Lambson Draw, and Pot Creek Range Allotments



Anthro Mountain and Antelope Range Allotments

Legend

-  Ashley NF Boundary
-  Private Land
-  Allotment Boundary



Map produced 11/29/2006 by D. Bamrough, Ashley NF
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