

10-30-92

IN REPLY REFER TO:



United States Department of the Interior

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
SUSANVILLE DISTRICT OFFICE
705 Hall Street
Susanville, California 96130

1730-IVMP
CA-020

OCT 30 1992

Dear Reader:

I need to update you on the issue of our management of the East Lassen Deer Herd area and invite you to attend one of our public workshops scheduled for mid-November. Summer is ending and we have been spending many hours in the field implementing our grazing decisions of last spring. We have been attempting to keep you informed of our activities through the "East Lassen Update" which was sent out on June 19 and August 28, 1992. Additionally, various other mailings specific to an individual allotment have been mailed to many of you to keep you informed or request your input.

During the summer we have been continuing to develop and implement our course of action in the East Lassen area. As you are aware, we issued Grazing Decisions for the Twin Peaks and Tuledad allotments on March 6 and April 15, 1992, respectively. These decisions are under appeal by the Nevada Department of Wildlife, California Department of Fish and Game, Natural Resources Defense Council, Mountain Lion Foundation, National Audubon Society, California Mule Deer Association, Sierra Club, and the California Native Plant Society and are currently before the Department of Interior's Office of Hearings and Appeals.

Compounding this situation, we are officially entering our seventh year of drought. I personally have made various trips with staff into the area and first hand have observed the dry conditions. I spent a day with my District Advisory Council in the Observation and Twin Peaks allotments and gathered their advice on the issue. They are a council which represent multiple interests from agriculture to wildlife and general environmental organizations to mining. They provided fresh insight on the issue.

So, what actions were taken to ameliorate the situation this summer after the grazing season was underway? I set up a project team that will plan for the overall guidance of the area as it relates to the land use plans and pave the way for the development of integrated activity plans that will be started this fiscal year. I named John Bosworth, the Assistant District Manager for Administration, to be the project manager. He has established a team made up of resource specialists from both the District and Resource Area staffs to develop umbrella guidance that addresses the issue of the ungulate use of vegetation. This guidance will clarify the direction in the land use plans for their applicability on specific geographic areas and then prioritize the areas for

integrated activity plan development and implementation. I expect this guidance to be finished in early spring and for us to be well on the way of integrated activity plan development next summer. These integrated activity plans will set the specific implementation direction for all the land use objectives pertinent to these areas. Integrated activity plans are not a new concept and are along the lines of one of our real successes in the Cedar Creek Area of the Alturas Resource Area.

The umbrella guidance will serve the purpose of clarifying the land use plan decisions and setting priorities of the resources that the land use plan was not clear in setting. It will state the goals and the desired landscape for a geographic area and the priority that I am placing on the area to achieve this desired landscape. This is needed to allow us to place our limited funds and manpower in the areas of greatest need first and schedule the areas of lesser priority second.

In addition to the effort John is heading, I was also concerned about the affects the drought was having on the Grazing Decisions we implemented in the Twin Peaks and Tuledad allotments last Spring and how we were doing in implementing those decisions. So, in July of 1992, I requested an internal review of the implementation of the decisions of the Twin Peaks and Tuledad allotments that were issued on March 6 and April 15, 1992. The review was conducted by the California State Office Range Conservationist and Wildlife Biologist on July 21 and 22, 1992. The purpose was to conduct a review of compliance to date with the conditions outlined in the Grazing Decisions. I also asked them to comment on the affect that the drought was having on the ability to implement these conditions. This evaluation was conducted in coordination with the Eagle Lake and Surprise Resource Areas. I am enclosing the results of their report along with the actions that we are taking on the recommendations.

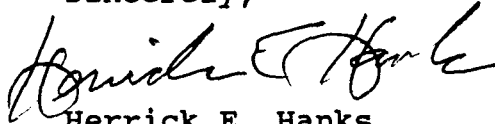
During this fall, we are also examining whether or not, and under what criteria, the District will be open for livestock grazing next year (1993). I have directed the Associate District Manager, Bob Sherve, to put together an interdisciplinary team to look at this issue and establish the criteria. We expect to present a draft preliminary conclusion and criteria to the District Grazing Advisory Board for their review in November. I am concerned that for any grazing to occur next year, the drought cycle must be broken. Because of lack of water this year, we curtailed cattle grazing in the Twin Peaks allotment by October 15, 1992, two and one half months before the end of the normal grazing season.

I hope we are keeping you well enough informed on this issue. We will continue to send out the "East Lassen Update" and various other relevant information. We will also have two public workshops on the topic. The first will be in Sacramento on Monday, November 16, 1992 at 7:00 p.m. at the Radisson Hotel, 500 Leisure Lane, in Conference Suite 303, just off of Hwy 160. The second will be in Susanville on Tuesday, November 17, 1992 at 7:00 p.m. in the

Multipurpose Room of Lassen High School, Main Street, Susanville.
The purpose of these meetings will be to explain how we are addressing this issue and to solicit any input that you may have. Additionally, we will have draft products available of our resource data base for you to review, and those who are familiar to the area, to validate.

I hope this letter helps inform you of what is happening on this complex issue. If you care to send me any comments, please address them to East Lassen Issue, USDI-Bureau of Land Management, 705 Hall Street, Susanville, CA 96130.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Herrick E. Hanks".

Herrick E. Hanks
District Manager