

## BLM Plans Overhaul of Grazing Regulations

by Greg Henderson, 11:40AM Jan 21, 2020



The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) is preparing to [overhaul regulations for grazing](#) on 155 million acres of public lands across the western United States. The BLM published a Notice of Intent (NOI) in the Federal Register on Tuesday (Jan. 21), and opened a public comment period and announced in-person meetings will be held in four locations.

The agency announced it is preparing an environmental impact statement on its proposed updated grazing rules, and will address grazing permit procedures, land use planning, and how best to use grazing to address and reduce wildlife risks.

“We continue to seek ways to improve and streamline the grazing permit process to achieve greater efficiencies and service to permittees,” said Acting Assistant Secretary of Land and Minerals Management Casey B. Hammond. “This rulemaking effort is designed to strengthen and improve our administration of grazing permits across the West, and we welcome public and stakeholder ideas and perspectives.”

“This is a once-in-a-generation opportunity for BLM permittees to set the record straight,” said Dr. J.J. Goicoechea who chairs the NCBA Federal Lands Committee and PLC’s Grazing Regulations Working Group. “We have endured Bruce Babbitt’s ‘Range Reform’ for over 25 years—and the land, native grasses, and local ranching families have suffered as a result. This NOI is the first step toward righting that wrong. I cannot understate how important it is for ranchers to submit comments and participate in these scoping meetings.”

BLM’s announcement also said changes will address how it handles unauthorized grazing on public lands by “strengthening controls to prevent unauthorized grazing, enhancing

environmental protections across various non-grazing land-use programs, and improving public input opportunities.”

BLM’s proposals, however, are opposed by anti-grazing groups. The Western Watersheds Project says the proposed changes are an attempt by the Trump Administration to appease “grazing permittees that break the rules.”

WWP Deputy Director Greta Anderson told [E&E News](#), a news organization focusing on energy and the environment, "We already see very, very few grazing permits undergoing environmental analysis as it is. The Trump Administration apparently intends to gut even that level of informed public participation in administering this heavily subsidized handout on federal lands."

The BLM plans four public meetings about the proposed revisions. The meetings include:

- Miles City, Montana: February 6, at the Sleep Inn and Suites, 1006 S. Haynes Ave., from 4:30-7:30 p.m.;
- Las Cruces, New Mexico: February 11 at the Las Palmas Grill, 201 East University Ave., from 4:30-7:30 p.m.;
- Elko, Nevada: February 18 at the Elko Convention Center, 700 Moren Way, from 4:30-7:30 p.m.; and
- Casper, Wyoming: February 20, at the Casper Events Center, 1 Events Dr., from 4:30-7:30 p.m.

Comments on the proposed regulation revisions may be submitted in writing until Feb. 28, 2020. Meeting information, announcements, instructions on how to provide comments, and pertinent documents can be found at the BLM website at <https://go.usa.gov/xyMqb>