

Manti-La Sal NF Forest Plan Revision Assessment Information

>20% slope: Rarely used by cattle

Grand Canyon Trust
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Significant Issue

The low percent (35.8 %) of Manti-La Sal NF topography that is lower than 20% slope is the focus of nearly all cattle grazing (see Gaskopp and Vavra 1987; Lyons and Machen 1991; Pinchak et al. 1991). This is a significant assessment issue because:

1. **The Forest Service inflates the acres/forage used by permitted cattle** because the agency assumes cattle are using forage on slopes 0%-30%. The overwhelming use is on slopes <20%.
2. **Cattle concentrate on palatable vegetation on slopes of <10% and <20%.** Sagebrush communities, mesic meadows, riparian areas, aspen, and grasslands of low gradient are highly palatable and at the same time highly preferentially used by cattle.
3. **Grazing on lands >20% slope risks erosion.** While salting and water distribution with pipes and troughs may attempt to expand cattle use onto steep slopes, a tradeoff is erosion.

Information Provided

1. Vegetation maps of the Ferron-Price and Sanpete Districts and the Moab-Monticello District showing the scarcity of land used in cattle allotments (though sheep graze much of the Ferron-Price RD).
[-0-10% slope, Moab-Monticello](#)
[-0-10% slope, Ferron-Price](#)
[-0-20% slope, Moab-Monticello](#)
[-0-20% slope, Ferron-Price](#)
2. [Excel sheet showing percent of each MLSNF allotment, by vegetation type, that is less than 10% slope and between 11% and 20% slope](#)
3. [Gaskopp, D and M Vavra. 1987. Slope use by cattle, feral horses, deer, and bighorn sheep. Northwest Science, 61\(2\): 74-81](#)
4. [Lyons, RK, and RV Machen. 1991 Livestock grazing distribution: considerations and management.](#) Range Detect Series. Texas Cooperative Extension.
5. [Pinchak, WE, MA Smith, RH Hart, and JW Waggoner. 1991 Beef cattle distribution patterns on foothill range. Journal of Range Management 44\(3\):267-275.](#)

Assessment Needed

1. The degree to which capacity for cattle has been calculated in the past (1960s?) on the basis of slopes 21%-30% should be assessed and discussed in the EIS.