

## MONROE MOUNTAIN COMMON GROUND INITIATIVE CHARTER FOR 1993-1998

### CHARTER AGREEMENT

We, the undersigned, support the Monroe Mountain Common Ground Initiative and its goals to improve management of livestock and wildlife on all lands, regardless of ownership, in the Monroe Mountain Area of South Central Utah. The initiative illustrates our commitment to deal with wildlife habitat and livestock grazing issues through partnerships that rely on natural resource professionals, concerned citizens, and groups. This five year charter describes goals, issues, and strategies for managing the Monroe Mountain ecosystems in partnership under this initiative.

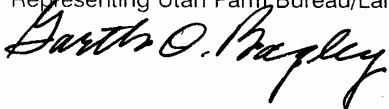
The primary goal of this initiative is to more effectively manage the area using an ecosystems management philosophy as applied to projects and field activities. Innovation and cooperation will be key to our success. We will move forward in an open, active, and creative manner to accomplish our goals.

This agreement does not change the legal mandates or decision-making authority or processes of participants. Rather, it enables participants to more effectively share costs, staffing, labor, and other resources to implement projects and activities for mutual benefit.

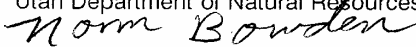
This initiative reflects the importance of developing a common ground to meet the needs of the ecosystem as well as the expectations of those dependent on the area. Of equal importance is our collective recognition that wildlife can have an effect on landowners, industries, recreationists, and other users of the area. As such, management of all species, domestic and wild, requires close and open communications and coordination between all interests. This is another step in our efforts to manage these resources wisely for present and future generations. Participants include, but are not limited to the signatories that follow:

#### MONROE MOUNTAIN COMMON GROUND INITIATIVE STEERING COMMITTEE

GARTH BAGLEY, Livestock Permittee  
Representing Utah Farm Bureau/Landowners



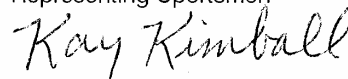
NORM BOWDEN, Wildlife Biologist  
Representing Division Wildlife Resources  
Utah Department of Natural Resources



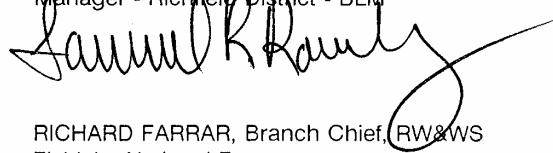
BRAD WILLIAMS, Forester  
Representing Division of State Lands  
& Forestry - Utah Department of Natural  
Resources



KAY KIMBALL, President  
Sevier Wildlife Federation  
Representing Sportsmen



SAM ROWLEY, Assistant District  
Manager - Richfield District - BLM



RICHARD FARRAR, Branch Chief, RW&WS  
Fishlake National Forest

 2/8/94

GERALD CANNON  
Representing Monroe Mountain Trophy  
Elk Association



## AREA DESCRIPTION

The project area is located southeast of Richfield, Utah. The area includes 318,000 acres, with 65 percent administered by the Fishlake National Forest, 26 percent by the Richfield District of the Bureau of Land Management, 7 percent by the Utah Division of State Lands and Forestry as State School Trust Lands, and the remainder is owned by the Utah Division of Wildlife Resources, the Piute Indians, and private landowners.

The project is located in Piute and Sevier Counties. The area is a somewhat isolated mountain range of the Wasatch Plateau. The proposed boundaries encompass a unique ecological management unit that lends itself to demonstration of ecosystem management principles.

The unit includes a complete spectrum of summer and winter range for both livestock and big game. Approximately 3,500 cattle and 5,000 sheep will be affected by the project. In addition, there are 600-800 elk and over 5,000 deer.

## INITIATIVE STRATEGY

Key aspects to selecting Monroe Mountain and vicinity as a demonstration area ties to strong community awareness of the area and community commitment to development of a management strategy that meets the needs and interest of as many people as possible. In addition, the area is somewhat isolated from surrounding geography allowing better focus on the interests and individuals that need to be involved.

This program will be initiated by establishment of a steering committee of the principal land managers and those with special interests in the area, including private landowners. The steering committee will develop a management strategy for the area and coordinate efforts at developing solutions to problems.

An advisory committee will be established, made up of representative of all interested parties. This will include Research Stations, wildlife, livestock, sportsmen's groups, environmentalists, local government, etc. The advisory committee's role will be to provide recommendations to the steering committee regarding management of the area. They will also provide recommendations for public participation in the management process.

Partners and volunteers will join the project effort as endorsees' of a Stewardship Management Program for the area. All partners will sign a Stewardship Management Agreement that outlines the contributions and responsibilities of the partner.

Annually, a report on management progress will be produced and distributed to interested parties.

#### GOALS - THE PURPOSES FOR THIS INITIATIVE ARE SEVERAL

1. Resolve many of the issues, real or perceived, that have developed between livestock interests and big game interests within the project area.
2. Improve overall cooperation between the various land management and private land management entities.
3. Apply management practices to the ground that result in improved management of the resource, both on public and private land.
4. Develop solutions to livestock/big game interactions that can be exported to other areas.
5. Support efforts to successfully manage the area as a quality elk management unit for both hunting and viewing trophy class bulls.
6. Contribute to an economically viable livestock grazing program in the area.

## OBJECTIVES

1. Identify sufficient sources of funding to get this project under way by March 1, 1993.
2. Initiate designation of steering team and clear a charter for their operation by August 1, 1993.
3. Implement the various objectives of the affected Allotment Management Plans.
4. Within five years, see a significant progress toward improvement of food to cover ratios, a significant increase in grass and forb production and improved aspen reproduction.
5. Within ten years, reduce the amount of sagebrush in key meadow areas by 50 percent.
6. Selectively remove trees around meadows to enhance edge effects and expand the size of meadows.
7. Reduce pinyon/juniper invasions in key winter range.
8. Improve the quality of winter and spring forage at the DWR's Elbow Ranch and other key wintering areas.
9. Within 10 years, reduce big game depredation to private crops to acceptable levels.
10. Increase forage production for livestock.
11. Manage the existing elk herd to maintain a bull/cow ratio above 35 percent and determine an acceptable breeding herd size.

## ISSUES TO BE RESOLVED

Big game/livestock competition.

Fear that increasing elk populations will drive down livestock permit numbers or eliminate livestock from the range entirely.

Encroachment of high mountain meadows by trees and brush reducing forage areas for big game and livestock.

Encroachment of conifers into aspen stands and decline in number of aspen stands.

Age of existing aspen stands, lack of diverse age classes in aspen, and anticipated decline in aspen health.

Overgrazing by both livestock and big game.

PJ encroachment into winter range.

Increasing elk population is causing competition on spring range.

Increasing beaver activity changing riparian areas into ponds.

Depredation of private croplands by big game species.

Demand by sportsmen to improve the deer herd in the project area.

Need for coordinated livestock/big game grazing systems in Allotment Management Plans.

Demand by sportsmen and wildlife watchers to manage the area for trophy elk, placing strict limits on harvests of both bulls and cows. At the same time, livestock interests want strict limits placed on elk numbers in the project area.

Water users are demanding more control of beaver populations, including removal of dams.

Landowners are increasingly posting their lands to public access.

Recreation use, especially wildlife viewing and ATV use of the Paiute ATV trail are increasing rapidly.

## RESOURCES IN NEED OF IMPROVEMENT

### Summer Range:

Vegetative manipulation, especially regeneration of decadent aspen stands and meadow encroachment are essential to maintaining adequate summer range for both big game and livestock. Use of prescribed fire has successfully improved forage conditions. Past projects are in need of maintenance to improve lost productivity and to retain the investment already made in improved forage production. More areas are in need of treatment.

Natural high elevation meadows are shrinking as a result of sagebrush and spruce encroachment. Aspen stands are generally mature or overmature. The demands for summer forage have increased with the increased elk populations.

### Winter Range:

Much of the winter range, especially on the west side of the project area is in need of extensive rehabilitation. Chainings have been very successful in the past at improving forage production. Many of these areas were opened up 20 years ago and are now being re-invaded by juniper. They are in desperate need of treatment to retain previous investments in productivity. Improved winter range conditions will greatly reduce depredation on private land crops.

### Riparian Zones:

Many riparian areas are in need of improved beaver management and improved grazing management. There is need for some protective fencing, log barriers, and other structures to protect riparian habitat.

### Timber Areas:

Timbered areas are in need of some selective and group selection cutting to improve forest health, maintain or expand meadows, and regenerate aspen. Spruce and fir beetle infestations are an increasing problem.

### Watchable Wildlife:

This area has been designated a "watchable wildlife" area and will develop national recognition over time as "the place" to see and photograph trophy class elk. Much can be done to enhance and interpret the recreational experience associated with this area. Informational brochures on the demonstration and construction of viewing platforms and blinds will greatly compliment this effort. Big deer and other wildlife are also attractions in the area.

### Roads:

Improvement of several of the main arterial roads will be necessary to enhance the "watchable wildlife" opportunities. Since this area is being managed for trophy class elk, it will attract many visitors looking for an opportunity to see and photograph such animals. Some roads in the are in need of closure, also.

### Water Developments:

Water developments in the project area need maintenance. Additional developments are needed to better disperse livestock on the summer range. Elk wallows can be improved to better disperse summer elk use.

Range Improvements:

Some fences could be removed and new ones developed under a totally new allotment management strategy. The strategy will focus on using livestock to accomplish ecosystem management objectives. A more open less traditional program will be developed. Some new fencing will be necessary to reduce depredation to crops.

Recreation:

Improvement of picnic and sanitation facilities, dispersed recreation sites, roads and recreation trails will be necessary to accommodate increasing recreation use. Scenic driving and "watchable wildlife" activities will be capturing regional and national attention.

## MONITORING

Funding levels have not been adequate to provide the desired level of monitoring. With adequate funding, an ecologist/botanist will be hired to work with existing personnel and partners to develop a monitoring plan and establish baseline data for the first five years of the project. Partners, including Forest Service Research, and volunteers will be used to assist in data collection.

The information and subsequent data collections will be stored in a database compatible to electronic data files used by the various land management agencies involved. A GIS compatible system is preferable.

The steering committee will oversee these efforts and monitor results. Radio telemetry systems will be used to facilitate studies of game and livestock movement. This information could be combined with existing data for elk in the area and help establish a database on interrelationships and interactions.

An accomplishment and monitoring report will be produced annually and shared with stakeholders in the project.

Seeking Common Ground

A Livestock/Big Game Demonstration Area Proposal

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1. Name of Project:

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The Monroe Mountain Livestock/Big Game Demonstration Project  
Fishlake National Forest  
R-4



## Seeking Common Ground

### A Livestock/Big Game Demonstration Area Proposal

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#### 2. Description of project location:

(Include type of land ownership, geographic location, and size.)

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The project area is located in south central Utah within the Sevier River drainage of the Great Basin. The boundary includes 318,000 acres, with 65 percent administered by the Fishlake National Forest, 26 percent by the Richfield District of the Bureau of Land Management, 7% by the Utah Division of State Lands and Forestry as State School Trust Lands, and the remainder is owned by the Utah Division of Wildlife Resources, the Piute Indians, and private landowners.

The project is located in Piute and Sevier Counties. The area is a somewhat isolated mountain range of the Wasatch Plateau. The proposed boundaries encompass a unique ecological management unit that lends itself to demonstration of ecosystem management principles.

The unit includes a complete spectrum of summer and winter range for both livestock and big game. Approximately 3500 cattle and 5000 sheep would be affected by the project. In addition, there are 600-800 elk and over 5000 deer.

There are also numerous opportunities to incorporate other wildlife interactions into the project, especially those related to beaver, game birds, and fisheries. The area includes known habitat for the goshawk and eagles. The Utah Division of Wildlife Resources owns the water rights in several reservoirs and is managing Manning Meadow Reservoir for the Bonneville Cutthroat trout, a sensitive species.

The geology of the area is basically mixed volcanics. Soil inventories and mapping have been completed at the 1:24,000 scale. The elevation ranges from 11,227 feet on Monroe Peak to 5,200 feet at Rocky Ford Reservoir at the northern tip of the project area. Drainage is into the Sevier River system of the Great Basin.

Habitat classification was completed during the soils survey. Sagebrush/grass/pinyon-juniper dominate the lower elevation grading into oak and other mountain brush at mid-elevations. These areas constitute the primary winter and intermediate range for big game and livestock. The upper elevations are dominated by mixed alpine fir/spruce/aspens stands interspersed with meadows or riparian areas. This is the primary summer range.

There are numerous types of riparian areas within the project area. A growing population of beaver has many of them in a state of flux. The livestock interests and water users are increasingly concerned about the increased beaver activity.

Vegetation in the area also is showing signs of increased stress, the direct effect of a 5-7 year drought combined with heavy grazing by both wildlife and livestock. Spruce and fir are increasingly being affected by beetles as a result of the stressed conditions.

Access to the project area is excellent. Interstate 70 runs along the northwestern boundary. Paved state highways, 24, 62, and 89 constitute the remainder of the boundary. Improved dirt roads branch off the paved road providing seasonal access to the higher elevations. Most of the roads and trails at mid and higher elevations are closed in the winter. Even with good access, there are several large portions of the area that remain roadless. There is adequate rugged terrain to provide excellent escape cover for deer and elk, even within the roaded areas. The popular Paiute ATV trail traverses the area also.

The entire project area is within State Big Game Herd Unit 48 - Monroe Mountain.

### Seeking Common Ground

#### A Livestock/Big Game Demonstration Area Proposal

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#### 3. List project strategy, goals, and objectives:

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##### Strategy:

Key aspects to selecting Monroe Mountain and vicinity as a demonstration area ties to strong community awareness of the area and community commitment to development of a management strategy that meets the needs and interest of as many people as possible. In addition, the area is somewhat isolated from surrounding geography allowing better focus on the interests and individuals that need to be involved.

This program would be initiated by establishment of a steering committee of the principal land managers and those with special interests in the area, including private landowners. The steering committee would develop a management strategy for the area and coordinate efforts at developing solutions to problems.

An advisory committee would be established, made up of representative of all interested parties. This would include Research Stations, wildlife, livestock, sportsmen's groups, environmentalists, local government, etc. The advisory committee's role would be to provide recommendations to the steering committee regarding management of the area. They would also provide recommendations for public participation in the management process.

Partners and volunteers would join the project effort as endorsees' of a Stewardship Management Program for the area. All partners would sign a Stewardship Management Agreement that outlined the contributions and responsibilities of the partner.

Annually, a report on management progress would be produced and distributed to interested parties.

Goals:

The purposes for this demonstration project are several:

1. Resolve many of the issues, real or perceived, that have developed between livestock interests and big game interests within the project area.
2. Improve overall cooperation between the various land management and private land management entities.
3. Apply management practices to the ground that result in improved management of the resource, both on public and private land.
4. Develop solutions to livestock/big game interactions that can be exported to other areas.
5. Support efforts to successfully manage the area as a quality elk management unit for both hunting and viewing trophy class bulls.
6. Contribute to an economically viable livestock grazing program in the area.

Objectives:

1. Identify sufficient sources of funding to get this project under way by March 1, 1993.
2. Initiate designation of steering team and clear a charter for their operation by March 1, 1993.
3. Implement the various objectives of the affected Allotment Management Plans.
3. Within five years, see a significant improvement in food to cover ratios; a significant increase in grass and forb production and improved aspen reproduction.
4. Within five years, reduce the amount of sagebrush in key meadow areas by 50 percent.
5. Selectively remove trees around meadows to enhance edge effects and expand the size of meadows.
6. Reduce pinyon/juniper invasions in key winter range.
7. Improve the quality of winter and spring forage at the DWR's Elbow Ranch and other key wintering areas.
8. Within 10 years, reduce big game depredation to private crops by 80 percent.
9. Increase forage production for livestock.
10. Manage the existing elk herd to maintain a bull/cow ratio above 35 percent and a breeding herd size of 1000-1200 mature animals.

Seeking Common Ground

A Livestock/Big Game Demonstration Area Proposal

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4. What are the conflicts/problems in the project area?

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Major problems include:

Big game/livestock competition.

Fear that increasing elk populations will drive down livestock permit numbers or eliminate livestock from the range entirely.

Encroachment of high mountain meadows by trees and brush reducing forage areas for big game and livestock.

Encroachment of conifers into aspen stands and decline in number of aspen stands.

Age of existing aspen stands, lack of diverse age classes in aspen, and anticipated decline in aspen health.

Overgrazing by both livestock and big game.

PJ encroachment into winter range.

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Need for coordinated livestock/big game grazing systems in Allotment Management Plans.

Demand by sportsmen and wildlife watchers to manage the area for trophy elk, placing strict limits on harvests of both bulls and cows. At the same time, livestock interests want strict limits placed on elk numbers in the project area.

Water users are demanding more control of beaver populations, including removal of dams.

Landowners are increasingly posting their lands to public access.

Recreation use, especially wildlife viewing and ATV use of the Paiute ATV trail are increasing rapidly.

History:

Efforts to resolve conflicts and problems have been severely limited by shortages in both funding and people in the land management agencies. In addition, local partners and permittees are financially strained. The area is economically depressed and in need of revitalization.

There has been some use of prescribed fire and cutting to regenerate aspen, chainings in the pinyon/juniper, and several small timber sales. The results have been very good. The prescribed burns have increased forage, the number of ecotones between brush and new grass and forbs, and opened up dense stands of conifers and aspen. Chainings, especially those in Box Creek, are excellent examples of how chainings can be planned and conducted to blend existing environments, maximize ecotones and esthetics, as well as increase forage for deer, elk, and livestock. There is a market for spruce in the area, but markets are limited for subalpine fir and aspen. Consequently, fire is often the most practical tool for vegetative manipulation in the forested areas. The small aspen management projects conducted in the area demonstrate that aspen regeneration is possible and that forage production and stimulation of aspen regeneration can be done in unison.

The Forest Service and the Utah Division of Wildlife Resources have cooperated on a beaver management policy that allows for removal of beaver in irrigation structures or when their activities impede direct flow of water for irrigation.

There have been some changes in elk and deer herd management for the unit through the interagency process. Since the 1990 Nevada Livestock/Big Game Symposium there have been more efforts to get livestock owners and sportsmen together to resolve conflicts. These efforts have been effective this year in development of the annual predator control program, and development of the Lion, Bear Hunting Proclamation.

Local county committees of livestockmen, county agents, agency representatives, and sportsmen have been formed to discuss issues and problems. The UDWR recently purchased the Elbow Ranch in the project area, a critical big game winter range. They also acquired water rights to two reservoirs flowing into the ranch. They intend to manage the area for winter range.

The area was cooperatively flown to collect baseline population data.

## Seeking Common Ground

### A Livestock/Big Game Demonstration Area Proposal

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#### 5. What resources are in need of improvement?

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##### Summer Range:

Vegetative manipulation, especially regeneration of decadent aspen stands and meadow encroachment are essential to maintaining adequate summer range for both big game and livestock. Use of prescribed fire has successfully improved forage conditions. Past projects are in need of maintenance to improve lost productivity and to retain the investment already made in improved forage production. More areas are in need of treatment.

Natural high elevation meadows are shrinking as a result of sagebrush and spruce encroachment. Aspen stands are generally mature or overmature. The demands for summer forage have increased with the increased elk populations.

##### Winter Range:

Much of the winter range, especially on the west side of the project area is in need of extensive rehabilitation. Chainings have been very successful in the past at improving forage production. Many of these areas were opened up 20 years ago and are now being re-invaded by juniper. They are in desperate need of treatment to retain previous investments in productivity. Improved winter range conditions would greatly reduce depredation on private land crops.

##### Riparian Zones:

Many riparian areas are in need of improved beaver management and improved grazing management. There is need for some protective fencing, log barriers, and other structures to protect riparian habitat.

##### Timber Areas:

Timbered areas are in need of some selective and group selection cutting to improve forest health, maintain or expand meadows, and regenerate aspen. Spruce and fir beetle infestations are an increasing problem.

##### Watchable Wildlife:

This area has been designated a "watchable wildlife" area and will develop national recognition over time as "the place" to see and photograph trophy class elk. Much can be done to enhance and interpret the recreational experience associated with this area. Informational brochures on the demonstration and construction of viewing platforms and blinds would greatly compliment this effort. Big deer and other wildlife are also attractions in the area.



Roads:

Improvement of several of the main arterial roads would be necessary to enhance the "watchable wildlife" opportunities. Since this area is being managed for trophy class elk, it will attract many visitors looking for an opportunity to see and photograph such animals. Some roads in the area are in need of closure, also.

Water Developments:

Water developments in the project area need maintenance. Additional developments are needed to better disperse livestock on the summer range. Elk wallows can be improved to better disperse summer elk use.

Range Improvements:

Some fences could be removed and new ones developed under a totally new allotment management strategy. The strategy would focus on using livestock to accomplish ecosystem management objectives. A more open less traditional program would be developed. Some new fencing would be necessary to reduce depredation to crops.

Recreation:

Improvement of picnic and sanitation facilities, dispersed recreation sites, roads and recreation trails would be necessary to accommodate increasing recreation use. Scenic driving and "watchable wildlife" activities will be capturing regional and national attention.

### Seeking Common Ground

#### A Livestock/Big Game Demonstration Area Proposal

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##### 6. How will the success of the project be monitored?

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Funding levels have not been adequate to provide the desired level of monitoring. With adequate funding, an ecologist/botanist would be hired to work with existing personnel and partners to develop a monitoring plan and establish baseline data for the first five years of the project. Partners, including Forest Service Research, and volunteers would be used to assist in data collection.

The information and subsequent data collections would be stored in a database compatible to electronic data files used by the various land management agencies involved. A GIS compatible system is preferable.

The steering committee would oversee these efforts and monitor results. Radio telemetry systems would be used to facilitate studies of game and livestock movement. This information could be combined with existing data for elk in the area and help establish a database on interrelationships and interactions.

An accomplishment and monitoring report would be produced annually and shared with stakeholders in the project.