



United States Department of the Interior

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

Mesa Verde National Park
Colorado 81330

IN REPLY REFER TO:

N-79-08-1-9.1.A.2

January 17, 2013

Dear Interested Party:

The National Park Service is proposing to develop a management plan to control unclaimed trespass livestock in Mesa Verde National Park in southwestern Colorado. There are currently between 100-150 trespass horses both in the park and on its border. Trespass cattle have ranged in number from 10-20 in recent years. Park staff has documented severe impacts to archeological sites, native vegetation, and soils. Trespass livestock has also been documented out-competing native wildlife for water sources and damaging park facilities. There have also been dangerous confrontations reported between trespass livestock and park staff and visitors.

The proposed plan goals are to: 1) reduce threats to staff and public safety; 2) reduce negative impacts to the park's natural and cultural resources; and 3) reduce facility damage by trespass livestock. Management alternatives may include a variety of approaches including improved methods of excluding livestock from the park, returning the livestock to its owner, and auction.

An Environmental Assessment for reducing the adverse impacts of trespass livestock will be prepared in compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) to provide a decision-making framework that: 1) analyzes a reasonable range of alternatives to meet project objectives; 2) evaluates potential issues and impacts to park resources and values; and 3) identifies mitigation measures to lessen the degree or extent of these impacts.

The National Park Service encourages public participation throughout the NEPA process. The public has two opportunities to formally comment on the project: once during initial project scoping and again following release of the Environmental Assessment. We are currently in the scoping phase of this project, and invite you to submit your written comments online at the NPS Planning, Environment, and Public Comment website at <http://parkplanning.nps.gov/meve>.

If you are not able to submit comments electronically through this website, then you may submit written comments to me at the above address. Comments must be received by February 28, 2013 in order to be considered during preparation of the Environmental Assessment. We look forward to hearing from you!

Sincerely,

Cliff Spencer
Superintendent