United States Department of Agriculture

Office of the Secretary
Washington, D.C. 20250

10/13/2021

Mr. Joshua Osher
Public Policy Director
Western Watersheds Project
Post Office Box 1770
Hailey, Idaho 83333

Dear Mr. Osher:

Thank you for your letter of July 16, 2021, on behalf of your partner organizations, concerning drought conditions in the Western United States. I apologize for the delayed response.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Forest Service agrees the abnormally dry to extreme drought conditions are a concern, and we will continue monitoring its effect on the multiple uses that take place on National Forest System lands.

Forest Service Line Officers and Rangeland Specialists at all levels are working with grazing permittees to make administrative changes to the permitted grazing season where these conditions exist. Furthermore, we are focused on long-term management of the grazing resource at national, regional, and local levels. Thank you for the specific examples you provided; we will look into those situations.

We believe we have the necessary authority, rules, and regulations in place to be responsive to the current drought and climate change. Many of the changes you seek are best addressed during renewal of the land management plans that provide comprehensive guidance for resource management on all National Forests and Grasslands.

To find out more about ongoing plan revision efforts, please see our Land Management Plan Revision Story Map[1]. We encourage and value your participation, and that of your partner organizations, in developing these plans. To learn more about how you can engage, please see *A Citizen's Guide to National Forest Planning*[2].

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[1]Full link to Land Management Plan Revision Story Map here: https://usfs.maps.arcgis.com/apps/MapSeries/index.html?appid=cad3a24327944488927aabdba031397f

[2] Full link to A Citizen's Guide to National Forest Planning here: https://www.fs.usda.gov/Internet/FSE_DOCUMENTS/fseprd520671.pdf

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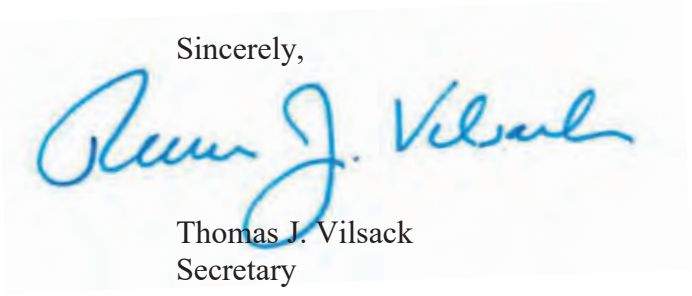
Thank you for writing and your interest in the management of National Forest System lands. If you have questions, please contact Chris French, Deputy Chief, National Forest System, at (202) 205–1689 or christopher.french@usda.gov.

Please share this response with your colleagues.

Sincerely,



Thomas J. Vilsack
Secretary