Summary of USFS Water Quality Standards and Guidelines for Grazing Allotments

The following briefly describes the process and how the Northern Province Forests within the Regional Water Board's North Coast Region address water quality on grazed allotments:

Plans that guide management activities with respect to water quality:

1. **Northwest Forest Plan Aquatic Conservation Strategies ("ACS")**
   - Directive to "maintain and restore" water quality with all actions.
2. **Forest Land and Resource Management Plan ("LRMP")**
   - Sets Standards & Guidelines for Range Management.
   - Sets Goals & Objectives for water quality consistent with the ACS.
3. **Allotment NEPA: Categorical Exclusion, Environmental Assessment, or Environmental Impact Statement (as appropriate)**
   - Analysis for NEPA compliance specific to an allotment or group of allotments that is to be completed according to the Rescission Schedule (see Table 1).
   - Allotment analyses must be in accordance to the ACS and the Forest LRMP.
   - Not all allotments have NEPA compliance completed (see Table 1)

Other guidance:

Water Quality Management for Forest System Lands in California, Best Management Practices **(USFS, Pacific Southwest Region, 2000)**

Permit administration:

1. **Region 5 Grazing Permit Administration Handbook (FSH 2209.13)**
   - Sets procedures for administering permits and handling non-compliance issues.
2. **Allotment Permit**
   - Sets specific criteria for allotment use (in accordance to the Allotment NEPA documentation) including number and kind of animals, season of use and communicates these criteria to the permittee. At most, a permit is for a renewable, 10-year term.
   - An allotment permit may be renewed, but not significantly modified, unless NEPA has been completed that addresses the modification.
   - An allotment may be "vacant" with no current permit, or "active" with a current permit to graze held by a permittee.
   - An active allotment may be in "non-use" in any given year for either the permittee's "personal convenience" or for "resource protection" reasons and the allotment will be either not grazed, or grazed with reduced numbers of animals.

3. **Annual Operating Instructions ("AOI")**
   - Addresses any resource protection issues that may have arisen since the issuance of a permit and communicates these instructions to the permittee.
   - AOI may only be issued if Allotment NEPA is completed and must be in accordance with the Allotment NEPA, the Forest LRMP, and the ACS.
4. **Out of NEPA Management**
   - When Allotment NEPA is not completed, mitigation of resource impairment issues is handled on a case by case basis, in accordance with the ACS and LRMP.

Compliance and effectiveness monitoring:

1. **Allotment inspections:** performed periodically to ensure stocking rates, season of use, allotment boundaries, and range improvement terms are being complied with.
2. **Utilization monitoring:** performed at a minimum at the end of the grazing season to ensure compliance with forage utilization limits.
3. **Riparian (Greenline) monitoring:** performed once every five years on selected sites and allotments in key areas to track the ecological trend of riparian vegetation and streambank stability. The long term goal is to identify additional sites as funding and resources allow based on identified needs.
4. **Rooted Frequency monitoring or other assessment of rangeland condition and trend:** performed once every five years on selected allotments in key areas to track the ecological trend of upland and meadow vegetation.
5. **BMP Evaluation Program:** performed annually at one or more, randomly selected site on each forest to assess implementation and effectiveness of Best Management Practices identified in Water Quality Management for Forest System Lands in California, Best Management Practices (USFS, Pacific Southwest Region, 2000) and fulfills requirements of the Management Agency Agreement with the California State Water Resources Control Board. This monitoring assesses whether site-specific BMPs have been developed and implemented, as well as vegetation and riparian condition.

Examples of practices used to comply with the ACS, Forest LRMP, Allotment NEPA:

1. Management of livestock numbers and season of use.
2. Use of drift fencing, fence enclosures, salt blocks, water developments, and herding to manage livestock distribution and forage utilization.
3. Prohibition on the use of salt blocks closer than ¼ mile from water.
4. Locating new and relocating existing animal handling structures (i.e. corrals) outside of riparian reserves if existing facilities are posing a risk to ACS objectives.
5. Use of spring developments and pipelines to reduce impacts to sensitive and impaired wetlands.
6. Other forest activities also address vegetation and watershed management (prescribed fire, fuels management, noxious weed control, habitat management, timber harvest, road management), with planning that includes the analysis of the cumulative effects of multiple activities.

Figure 1. Grazing Allotments (Active and Vacant) on Northern Province National Forests:

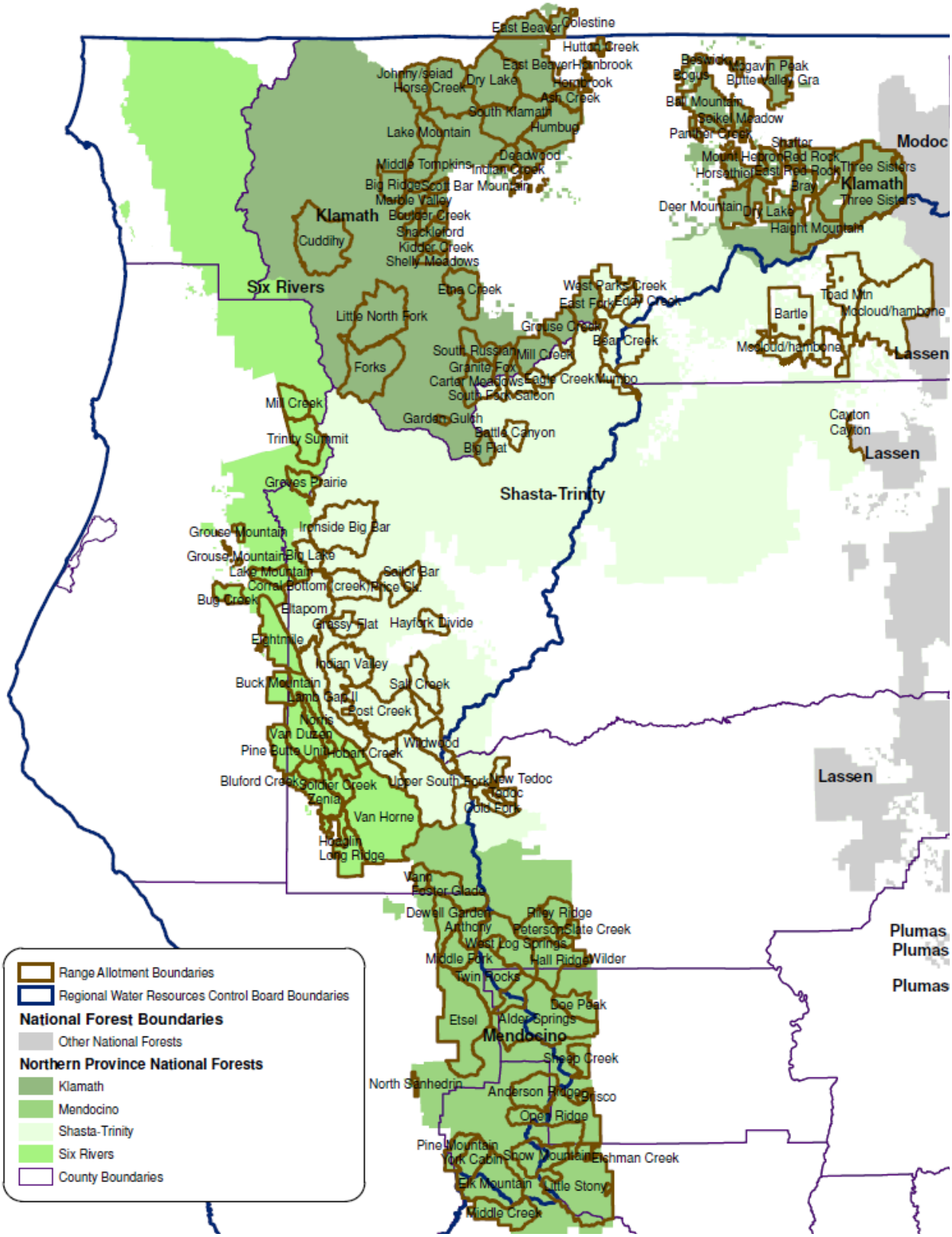

Table 1. Rescission Schedule for completion of NEPA documentation on Northern Province grazing allotments (allotments without current NEPA completed):

The Rescissions Act of 1995 (PL 104-19) became law on July 27, 1995. Section 504 addresses allotment analysis, grazing permit issuance, and compliance with National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and other environmental laws. Term grazing permits which expire or are waived before the NEPA analysis and decision is completed shall be issued on the same terms and conditions and for the full term of the waived or expired permits. Upon completion of the scheduled NEPA analysis and decision for the allotment, the terms and conditions of existing grazing permits may be modified or re-issued, if necessary to conform to such NEPA analysis.

The 2004 Interior Appropriations Act (PL 108-108), Section 325 provides that the Forest Service has the discretion to periodically update the allotment NEPA schedules and reprioritize which allotments will be done based on emerging environmental issues and available funding for allotment NEPA analyses.

Forest	District	Allotment Name*	NEPA Planning Period
Klamath	51	ASH CREEK	2010
Klamath	51	EAST BEAVER	2010
Klamath	51	HORNBROOK	2010
Klamath	55	KIDDER CREEK	2010
Klamath	55	SHACKLEFORD	2010
Klamath	57	BRAY	2010
Klamath	51	LAKE MOUNTAIN	2013
Klamath	55	MILL CREEK	2013
Klamath	57	HAIGHT MOUNTAIN	2013
Klamath	57	HORSETHIEF	2013
Klamath	57	MOUNT HEBRON	2013
Klamath	51	SOUTH KLAMATH	2016
Klamath	51	JOHNNY/SEIAD	2016
Klamath	54	BIG FLAT	2016
Klamath	55	GRANITE FOX	2016
Klamath	55	SOUTH FORK SALOON	2016
Mendocino	53	HALL RIDGE	2010
Mendocino	53	WILDER	2010
Mendocino	53	OPEN RIDGE	2010
Mendocino	56	DEWELL GARDEN	2013
Mendocino	56	ETSEL	2013
Mendocino	53	PETERSON	2016
Mendocino	53	WEST LOG SPRINGS	2016
Mendocino	53	DOE PEAK	2016
Six Rivers	53	MILL CREEK	2010
Six Rivers	53	TRINITY SUMMIT	2010
Six Rivers	53	BUG CREEK	2013
Six Rivers	53	GROUSE MOUNTAIN	2013

Forest	District	Allotment Name*	NEPA Planning Period
Six Rivers	54	BLUFORD CREEK	2016
Six Rivers	54	NORRIS	2016
Six Rivers	54	VAN DUZEN	2016
Shasta-Trinity	52	ELTAPOM	2010
Shasta-Trinity	56	BATTLE CANYON	2010
Shasta-Trinity	59	EDDY CREEK	2010
Shasta-Trinity	59	BEAR CREEK	2010
Shasta-Trinity	59	MUMBO	2010
Shasta-Trinity	59	WEST PARKS CREEK	2010
Shasta-Trinity	61	MCCLOUD/HAMBONE	2010
Shasta-Trinity	61	BARTLE	2010
Shasta-Trinity	61	TOAD MTN	2010
Modoc	A5401	ASH VALLEY	2010
Modoc	A5405	CRANK SPRINGS	2010
Modoc	A5408	EGG LAKE	2010
Modoc	A5409	HAPPY CAMP	2010
Modoc	A5423	GERIG	2010
Modoc	A5425	SHAWVILLE	2010
Modoc	A5430	KRAMER	2010
Modoc	A5508	AVANZINO	2010
Modoc	A5514	TRIANGLE	2010
Modoc	A5603	CRUMES (SHEEP)	2010
Modoc	A5610	MUD LAKE	2010
Modoc	A5613	TIMBER MOUNTAIN	2010
Modoc	A5614	TUCKER	2010
Modoc	A5411	REFUGE 1-N	2013
Modoc	A5413	ROUND MOUNTAIN	2013
Modoc	A5419	WHITEHORSE	2013
Modoc	A5402	BALLARD RIDGE	2016
Modoc	A5404	CENTERVILLE	2016
Modoc	A5417	STONE COAL	2016
Modoc	A5422	DERNER	2016
Modoc	A5424	CANYON CREEK	2016
Modoc	A5506	HAPPY CAMP	2016

* Some of these allotments are currently vacant or in non-use (i.e., ungrazed).