



## **Cows, Bikes, Hikes and Kites: Minimizing Conflict Between Public Recreation and Grazing Livestock**

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Public land managers often question whether or not public access and recreation can be compatible with livestock grazing. This paper describes the breadth and intensity of recreation occurring on public grazed lands in a highly urban area, the San Francisco Bay Area and documents the methods and strategies public agencies and livestock managers are using to minimize conflict between the public and livestock. Recreational pursuits occurring on these grazed lands included dog walking, biking, trail running, bird watching, hang gliding, kite flying, boating, camping, hiking, off-road vehicle use, horseback riding, and fishing. Both the public agencies and the livestock managers have implemented outreach methods, management strategies and established infrastructure to minimize public-livestock conflict. Outreach methods public agencies have developed include brochures, website postings, signage, special events, and interpretive programs. In addition to educating the public about avoiding conflict with livestock, these outreach tools inform the public about the stewardship values of livestock grazing. Livestock managers have worked to avoid visitor conflict and enhance aesthetic values of grazed public lands by adjusting grazing season and intensity, using rotational grazing, developing of off-site water, herding, culling “problem” livestock, and controlling calving seasons. Livestock managers and public agencies have worked together to develop specialized infrastructure that improve public compliance with keeping gates closed and fences intact. Based on the number of visitor- livestock conflicts reported compared to visitor numbers and reports of other visitor injuries, livestock grazing appears to be compatible with intensive public use and a diversity of recreational pursuits.

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