



# Cattle Producer's Handbook

Range and Pasture Section

575

## Writing Your Own NEPA Alternative

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As discussed in fact sheet 574, the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) is a complex subject with many parts. This fact sheet focuses on how to write your own alternative with the potential of it being the proposed action. In order to do so, you must understand the components of an Environmental Assessment (EA) or draft EIS. Viewing the figures in 574 (especially Figs. 2 and 3) will provide additional clarification to the preparation of a NEPA document and your role in this process.

### NEPA Document Contents

If you review agency NEPA documents that have been circulated to the public and review requirements in this document, common themes exist for what should be included in a NEPA document. We have identified those common themes in parentheses in the following outline:

1. Recitation of issues of concern (purpose and need for action).  
*If there are no major issues or concerns, the purpose may be just to reissue the grazing permit or to install some range improvements that will improve management on the allotment.*
2. Description and characterization of the allotment (existing conditions).
3. Historical information about the allotment (background or existing conditions).
4. Past management actions and projects and their success or failure (existing conditions, management history).
5. Mitigating factors (existing conditions, history and management).
6. Monitoring data summary (existing conditions, history and management).

7. Conformance with land use plan(s).
8. Compliance with pertinent laws, regulations, and policy (all action alternatives).
9. Goals and objectives (desired conditions).  
*As part of a Proposed Action, an adaptive management strategy should be included to provide for needed course corrections to meet goals and objectives.*
10. Environmental impacts of Proposed Action and alternatives (effects).
11. Supporting documents (references; monitoring data).

If you want to be a part of NEPA development for your allotment, be proactive in the development of the proposed action and any alternatives. It is important to understand that the scope of your alternative included in the Purpose and Need for Action should be focused on the authorization of livestock grazing, needed range improvements, and livestock management practices necessary for effects analysis (evaluation of suggested practices). Terms and conditions specified by the grazing permit will also be included under the adaptive management umbrella.

In assembling the items above, consult with agency partners, consultants, university personnel, family members, or other parties you think would provide helpful information. The preferred outcome is for the selection of the alternative that you have invested considerable effort to become the proposed action. View yourself as an investigative scientist in determining possible reasons for current conditions on the allotment and combine that with research to see if available information supports your preferred alternative.