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Wilderness groups file lawsuit to force grazing plan

The Associated Press

SALT LAKE CITY (AP) -- A pair of wilderness group are suing the federal government to force the implementation of a grazing plan in the Glen Canyon National Recreation Area.

The Center for Biological Diversity and Great Old Broads for Wilderness filed the lawsuit in U.S. District Court for Utah Friday.

It would compel the U.S. Department of Interior and to institute the 1999 plan when the Bureau of Land Management next renews grazing leases along the Utah-Arizona border.

"The Park Service recognized itself the livestock was causing damage to the resources up there so they formulated this management plan," said Greta Anderson, a botanist and range restoration coordinator for the Tucson, Ariz.-based Center for Biological Diversity. "So what we want is for them to enforce it."

A telephone call to the recreation area headquarters in Page, Ariz., was not immediately returned. And in Washington, Interior spokesman John Wright said the department could not comment.

The lawsuit alleges the plan has been ignored despite the renewal of leases in 24 areas. It claims resource damage includes vegetation, streams, archaeological sites and recreation.

To allow stream corridors "to be destroyed by indiscriminate cattle grazing is just not acceptable," said Rose Chilcoat, program director for Great Old Broads for Wilderness.

In a prepared statement, Veronica Egan, executive director of Great Old Broads, said her organization has made multiple attempts to resolve the issue through letters and discussion, but saw no changes made by the agency.