

EVALUATION AND DETERMINATION
Achieving the OR/WA Standards for Rangeland Health
and
Conformance with the Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management

Field Office: Medford Determination Date: January 9, 2012
 Grazing Allotment Name & Number: Howard Prairie #10116

Standard 1 Watershed Function – Uplands Standard doesn't apply

1 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Meeting the Standard	5 <input type="checkbox"/> Not Meeting the Standard, cause not determined
2 <input type="checkbox"/> Not Meeting the Standard, but making significant progress towards	
3 <input type="checkbox"/> Not Meeting the Standard, current livestock grazing management practices are not significant factors (list important causal agents)	6 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Conforms with Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management.
4 <input type="checkbox"/> Not Meeting the Standard, current livestock grazing management practices are significant factors (list important causal agents)	7 <input type="checkbox"/> Does not conform with Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management (list Guidelines No(s) in non-conformance)

Rationale for Determination: The main soil limitations affecting livestock grazing are erosion and compaction. This grazing system does not significantly diminish the health and function of the watershed. This is accomplished by maintaining adequate vegetative cover, healthy root systems, and soil moisture content. These factors aid in maintaining existing infiltration, percolation, runoff and erosion rates. The Rangeland Health Field Assessment (RHFA) indicators pertaining to Soil/Site Stability revealed that all 10 indicators were rated none to slight departure from the ecological site description, and zero were rated; slight to moderate, moderate, moderate to extreme, or an extreme to total departure.

Standard 2 Watershed Function – Riparian/Wetland Areas Standard doesn't apply

1 <input type="checkbox"/> Meeting the Standard	5 <input type="checkbox"/> Not Meeting the Standard, cause not determined
2 <input type="checkbox"/> Not Meeting the Standard, but making significant progress towards	
3 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Not Meeting the Standard, current livestock grazing management practices are not significant factors	6 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Conforms with Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management.
4 <input type="checkbox"/> Not Meeting the Standard, current livestock grazing management practices are significant factors	7 <input type="checkbox"/> Does not conform with Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management (list Guidelines No(s) in non-conformance)

Rationale for Determination:

The Howard Prairie Allotment has an estimated 4.8 miles of stream channels with 4.3 stream miles on Federal Land (BLM and BOR) (GIS data). Of these, 0.64 miles (3,379 feet) have been assessed for PFC: 1,689 feet (51%) were rated Functional at Risk with an upward trend (improving), 106 feet (3%) are Functional at Risk with a downward trend (degrading), and 1,584 feet (46%) are Non Functional. Additionally, a spring found on BOR land was rated as Non-Functional. Surveys also showed 47% of the stream reaches had high fine sediment levels (greater than 30%). Contributing factors other than the current livestock grazing authorization include; water augmentation from the canal, unauthorized grazing use, and recreational horse use from the Lily Glenn Equestrian Park (EA pp.7, 12-14, and 16).

Standard 3 Ecological Processes Standard doesn't apply

1 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Meeting the Standard	5 <input type="checkbox"/> Not Meeting the Standard, cause not determined
2 <input type="checkbox"/> Not Meeting the Standard, but making significant progress towards	
3 <input type="checkbox"/> Not Meeting the Standard, current livestock grazing management practices are not significant factors	6 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Conforms with Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management.
4 <input type="checkbox"/> Not Meeting the Standard, current livestock grazing management practices are significant factors	7 <input type="checkbox"/> Does not conform with Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management (list Guidelines No(s) in non-conformance)

Rationale for Determination: There is a healthy mix of live and dead/decaying matter on the rangeland and the energy, nutrient, and hydrologic cycles are balanced, utilization is low enough to not disrupt these cycles. The dry meadows and oak woodland plant communities support a diverse mix of plant species. However, invasive annual grass species are scattered in small patches within the allotment. In addition to reducing habitat quality for wildlife, annual grasses have shallower root systems and shorter life cycles than native perennial grasses, and thus have reduced capacity to hold the soil and retain water and nutrients. Introduction and establishment of exotic annual grasses occurred in past decades, and current livestock grazing is not intense enough to contribute to additional conversion of native plant communities to exotic annual grasslands.

Standard 4 Water Quality Standard doesn't apply

1 <input type="checkbox"/> Meeting the Standard	5 <input type="checkbox"/> Not Meeting the Standard, cause not determined
2 <input type="checkbox"/> Not Meeting the Standard, but making significant progress towards	
3 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Not Meeting the Standard, current livestock grazing management practices are not significant factors	6 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Conforms with Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management.
4 <input type="checkbox"/> Not Meeting the Standard, current livestock grazing management practices are significant factors	7 <input type="checkbox"/> Does not conform with Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management (list Guidelines No(s) in non-conformance)

Rationale for Determination:

Water originating within and above the allotment is stored in Howard Prairie Reservoir and released for irrigation and other purposes, grazing has no effect on stream temperatures within the listed reach of Grizzly Creek. Water quality impacts within the allotment have been documented in recent stream surveys. Channel incision and bank instability, particularly in the northeast portion of the allotment were noted in surveys conducted in October, 2006. Contributing factors other than the current livestock grazing authorization include; water augmentation from the canal, unauthorized grazing use, and recreational horse use from the Lily Glenn Equestrian Park (EA pp.7, 12-14, and 16).

Standard 5 Native, T&E, and Locally Important Species Standard doesn't apply

1 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Meeting the Standard	5 <input type="checkbox"/> Not Meeting the Standard, cause not determined
2 <input type="checkbox"/> Not Meeting the Standard, but making significant progress towards	
3 <input type="checkbox"/> Not Meeting the Standard, current livestock grazing management practices are not significant factors	6 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Conforms with Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management.
4 <input type="checkbox"/> Not Meeting the Standard, current livestock grazing management practices are significant factors	7 <input type="checkbox"/> Does not conform with Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management (list Guidelines No(s) in non-conformance)

Rationale for Determination: The allotment is meeting the Standards and Guidelines for protection of habitat for terrestrial and aquatic wildlife species. Current use levels on this allotment are slight-light therefore; special status species are not likely to be adversely affected by the grazing use. There are no effects to federally listed SONC coho salmon or their critical habitat as a result of this action. There are no effects to federally listed Northern Spotted Owls or their critical habitat as a result of this action.

The allotment is also meeting the Standards and Guidelines for protection of habitat of special status vascular and non-vascular plant species. The allotment is outside the range of federally listed plants so there is no impact to any federally threatened plant species and there are no known occurrences of any vascular or nonvascular sensitive species.

Field Manager's Determination Rationale:

Use levels on this allotment are slight-light therefore, special status species are not likely to be adversely affected by the grazing use. Current conditions suggest this action is a No Effect for coho salmon or their critical habitat as a result of this action. There are not effects to federally listed Northern Spotted Owls or their critical habitat from this action.

No occurrences of *Fritillaria gentneri* or any other federally listed plant species are known on federal lands within the allotment so there is no impact to any federally threatened plant species and there are no known occurrences of any vascular or nonvascular sensitive species. There is a healthy mix of live and dead/decaying matter on the rangeland and the energy, nutrient, and hydrologic cycles are balanced, utilization is low enough to not disrupt these cycles. Although invasive annual grass species are scattered in small patches within the allotment, current livestock grazing is not intense enough to contribute to additional conversion of native plant communities to exotic annual grasslands.

While streams within the allotment indicate issues with functionality, shade, and sedimentation analysis indicate the causal factors are associated with contributions from water augmentation from the canal, unauthorized grazing use, and recreational horse use from the Lily Glenn Equestrian Park (EA pp.7, 12-14, and 16). Water originating within and above the allotment is stored in Howard Prairie Reservoir and released for irrigation and other purposes. Grazing has no effect on stream temperatures within the listed reach of Grizzly Creek.

The Rangeland Health Field Assessment (RHFA) indicators pertaining to Soil/Site Stability revealed that all 10 indicators were rated none to slight departure from the ecological site description, and zero were rated; slight to moderate, moderate, moderate to extreme, or an extreme to total departure.

/s/ John Gerritsma
John Gerritsma, Field Manager

January 9, 2012
Date