

**EVALUATION AND DETERMINATION  
Achieving the Idaho Standards for Rangeland Health  
and  
Conformance with the Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management**

**Field Office:** 110-Four Rivers

**Determination Date:** 09/28/2007

**Grazing Allotment Name and Number:** Armacost Individual #12

**Name of Permittee:** John Brown #1101006

**Introduction**

Idaho has eight Standards for Rangeland Health and 20 Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management that are used as management goals for the betterment of the environment, protection of cultural resources, and sustained productivity of the range. These standards and guidelines, which provide the resource measures and guidance needed to ensure healthy, functional rangelands went into effect August 12, 1997 when approved by the Secretary of the Interior. Idaho's Standards and Guidelines were developed by the 45 members of Idaho's three Resource Advisory Councils, with the specific intent of providing for the multiple use of public lands. Indicators of rangeland health for the various standards are a list of typical physical and biological factors and processes that can be measured and/or observed. Only indicators appropriate to a particular site are used to provide information necessary to determine the health and condition of public rangelands.

This document is used to determine if rangeland health standards are being achieved and if livestock management is conforming with applicable guidelines. To step through the determination process, this document has been set up to:

- First, discuss activities associated with all the standards such as grazing permit administration, RMP directions, and how the field assessments were conducted.
- Second, evaluate and determine conformance for the applicable standards. This is done through a series of discussions on rangeland health, the changes to rangeland health, livestock management, and rationale statements.
- Third, present the Field Manager rationale statement and conformance determination of the entire allotment to Idaho's standards for rangeland health.

**Permit Administration**

Current grazing authorization; expires February 28, 2013:

Permittee	Livestock	Season of Use	Percent Public Land <sup>1</sup>	Grazing Preference		
				Active	Suspended	Total
John Brown	50 Cattle	04/01 to 04/30	50%	25	0	50
	50 Cattle	11/01 to 11/30	50%	25		

1. Per the grazing regulations, percent public land should be determined by the proportion of livestock forage available on public lands within the allotment compared to the total amount available from both public lands and those land owned or controlled by the permittee. In many cases this percentage was determined on a geographic basis.

The Rangeland Program Summary (RPS) of the RMP indicates there are 530 acres of public land within Armacost Individual Allotment. RMP allotment maps show that public land is fenced in with 920 acres of private land. This is a composition of approximately 37 percent public land and 63 percent private land. Our data base indicates there are no range improvements on file for this allotment. Livestock management follows an established season-of-use allowing spring use through the month of April. Livestock are then moved to other pastures, and return to this allotment for the month of November.

Armacost Allotment is grazed in the Spring and in the Fall. The allotment is in the “custodial” management category with M-2 moderate use goals and guidelines. Through the RMP, custodial management is defined as management to prevent resource deterioration. General goals and guidelines for M-2 moderate use areas, as described in the RMP, indicate that livestock grazing generally will continue where use currently exists. Timber and range management practices will include special measures to protect riparian and other resource values.

The overall RMP objective is to improve soil, vegetation, watershed, wildlife habitat, other resource values and conditions, and to provide vegetation for livestock, wildlife and other consumptive and nonconsumptive uses. An objective on the first page of the RPS indicates clearly that “forage production will be balanced with forage consumption to allow scheduled livestock use to occur in a manner that will maintain and/or improve vegetative condition.” The range resource management guideline (page 45 of the RMP) states that grazing preference will be at a level to ensure adequate forage is also available for wildlife and there are sufficient reserves to maintain plant vigor, to stabilize soils, and to provide cover for wildlife and other nonconsumptive uses.

### Field Assessments

One field assessment (number GU-210) was completed on the loamy site in the southern portion of the allotment October 21, 2002. Two field assessments were completed on public lands in Hornet Creek Allotment #152 (bordering the northeastern portion of Armacost Individual Allotment), which represent a south slope loamy site (number GU-221) and shallow south stony site (number GU-220), on November 20, 2002. Condition of the two range sites in the different allotments are the same, therefore information was extrapolated from Hornet Creek to provide rangeland health information in Armacost Individual Allotment. Field assessments were completed using the *Interagency Technical Reference 1734-6, Interpreting Indicators of Rangeland Health*, as the guide. The Adams and Washington Counties Soil Survey, published by NRCS, was used as a base map from which soil polygons were field checked for correlation to ecological site descriptions. Each ecological site has been combined into broader groupings when discussing applicable rangeland health standards.

### Broad Ecological Types

Ecological Type	NRCS Ecological Site		Number of Assessments	Public Lands Assessed	
	New	Old		Percent	Acreage
Loamy 16-22 inch precipitation zone	010XY003I	B10-03 B10-04*	1 – on site 1 – extrapolated	63%	324
Shallow Stony Loam 16-22 inch precipitation zone	010XY026I	B10-18	1 – extrapolated	20%	103
Very Shallow 12-20 inch precipitation zone	010XY002I		None	08%	41
Forested	N/A		None	09%	46
<b>Totals</b>			<b>1 – on site 2 – extrapolated</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>514</b>

\* The allotment specific rangeland health assessment (Appendix B, Assessment 1) indicated one of the ecological sites is B10-26. Assessment information for this site was extrapolated from another allotment. Upon review of the files, the correct ecological site is B10-04, as presented above.

Field mapping showed on-the-ground boundary fences does not match allotment boundaries as described in the RMP. Therefore, assessment data is based on field mapping which showed 514 acres of public land (36 percent) and 930 acres of private land (64 percent) within the existing fencelines. Since the field assessment was based on existing fencelines, written assessments, evaluations, and determinations reflect what was mapped, not the RMP figures. These percentages indicate composition of public land, and other lands, within the allotment boundary on a geographic basis, which is different from the percent public land term of the grazing permit.

In addition to rangeland health assessments, following data was also used to evaluation allotment conformance with Standards and Guidelines:

1. 100-point ground cover transects
2. Canopy cover of plant groups
3. Estimated stocking level
4. Proper Functioning Condition (PFC) assessments and fisheries inventories
5. Water quality assessments
6. Range Readiness Monitoring

Range readiness is an estimation of the appropriate time when livestock grazing may begin without causing permanent damage to soils and vegetation. Range readiness field exams in the general Goodrich area were conducted for three years, following public review of the Goodrich Watershed Assessment. Beginning in 2004, range readiness sites were visited periodically (between mid-March through mid-June) to determine when soils became firm following spring thaw, and when key forage species have reached the stage of growth where livestock grazing would not harm the plant.

**Standard 1: Watersheds**

Standard doesn't apply

*Watersheds provide for the proper infiltration, retention, and release of water appropriate to soil type, vegetation, climate and landform to provide for proper nutrient cycling, hydrologic cycling, and energy flow.*

**Evaluation and Information Sources (required, regardless of which box is checked):**

To examine watershed indicators, all ecological sites were grouped into a moderately deep to deep soils group and a shallow to very shallow stony soils group. Results from field assessments are displayed in the following tables, by indicator then by ecological grouping.

**Rangeland Health**

*Moderately Deep to Deep Soils Group*

*Number of assessments: 2 (one on-site; one extrapolated)*

*Represents 63% of public land in the allotment*

Indicators	Extreme	Moderate to Extreme	Moderate	Slight to Moderate	None to Slight
Rills					2
Water Flow Patterns				2	
Pedestals/Terracettes				1	1
Bare Ground				2	
Gullies					2
Wind Erosion					2
Soil Surface Resistance to Erosion			1	1	
Soil Surface Loss or Degradation				1	1
Compaction Layer					2
Plant Community Composition and Distribution				1	1

Indicators	Extreme	Moderate to Extreme	Moderate	Slight to Moderate	None to Slight
Relative to Infiltration and Runoff					
Reproductive Capability of Native Plants					2
<b>Total</b>			<b>1</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>13</b>

There are approximately 324 acres within this soils group. The vegetation composition and structure within Armacost Individual Allotment are similar to what is described as Potential Natural Community by NRCS. All rangeland health indicators were found to be within an acceptable range of similarity to the ecological site.

*Shallow to Very Shallow Stony Soils Group:*

*Number of assessments: 1 (extrapolated)*

*Represents 28% of public land in the allotment*

Indicators	Extreme	Moderate to Extreme	Moderate	Slight to Moderate	None to Slight
Rills					1
Water Flow Patterns					1
Pedestals/Terracettes				1	
Bare Ground					1
Gullies					1
Wind Erosion					1
Soil Surface Resistance to Erosion					1
Soil Surface Loss or Degradation					1
Compaction Layer					1
Plant Community Composition and Distribution Relative to Infiltration and Runoff				1	
Reproductive Capability of Native Plants					1
<b>Total</b>				<b>2</b>	<b>9</b>

This soils group represents approximately 144 acres of public land within the allotment. All indicators are within an acceptable range of departure from the reference ecological site description.

Timbered Lands

There are approximately 46 acres (nine percent of public lands) of timbered public lands within the allotment boundaries. These lands were not assessed for rangeland health.

**Rangeland Health Changes**

Moderately Deep to Deep Soils Group

Approximately 324 acres of public land within Armacost Individual Allotment were found to be within an acceptable range of the reference ecological site.

Ground cover was measured through a 100-point transect conducted at the field assessment sites.

Ecological Site	Litter	Standing Dead Vegetation	Bare Ground	Rock/Gravel	Cryptogams	Vascular Plants
Deeper Soils	29%	02%	04%	05%	0	60%

“Standing Dead Vegetation” includes both annual and dead perennial plants that have not been broken at the soil surface level. If broken, it becomes a form of litter.

“Cryptogams” are microorganisms (lichens, algae) and non-vascular plants (moss, lichens) that grow on or just below the soil surface.

“Vascular Plants” include canopy cover, as well as basal cover.

Shallow to Very Shallow Stony Soils Group

Approximately 144 acres of public land are within the shallow soils group, all of which were found to be within an acceptable range of similarity to the reference ecological site.

**Livestock Grazing Management**

A description of each Guideline for Livestock Grazing Management is attached to this Evaluation and Determination. Following are guidelines applicable to Standard 1:

Guidelines 1, 3, and 8 (grazing management practices): Livestock use of the allotment is authorized for spring use, beginning April first over 530 acres of public land for 50 AUMs. Based on ecological site descriptions and estimated suitability, stocking rate is estimated to be 9.4 acres/AUM.

Guidelines 6 and 17 (development of management facilities): At this time there are no known proposals for new range improvements. If projects are proposed in the future, these guidelines will be followed, however at this time these guidelines do not apply to livestock management.

Guideline 16 (burned area rehabilitation): If possible, natural regeneration will be allowed following a wildfire. If a seeding would be needed, future wildfire rehabilitation projects will include native seeds, as much as economically possibly and as seed availability permits. Seed mixes will represent the appropriate ecosystem diversity. If projects are proposed in the future, these guidelines will be followed. At this time this guideline does not apply to livestock management.

It is documented on the Rangeland Health Evaluation Summary Worksheet that there is early spring and summer use with evidence of deer and grouse along the ridge to the east.

**Conformance Rationale for Standard 1 and applicable Guidelines for Watersheds**

Based on GIS mapping, the 514 acres of public land within Armacost Individual Allotment constitute approximately 36 percent of the allotment. Field assessments showed this allotment has a stable soil surface and is capable of reproducing native vegetation. Overall this allotment is in conformance with the standards for watershed health.

[Check box 1, 2, 3, 4 or 5, and either box 6 or 7.]

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)

**Standard 2: Riparian Areas and Wetlands**

Standard doesn't apply

*Riparian-wetland areas are in properly functioning condition appropriate to soil type, climate, geology, and landform to provide for proper nutrient cycling, hydrologic cycling, and energy flow.*

*and*

**Standard 3: Stream Channel/Floodplain**

Standard doesn't apply

*Stream channels and floodplains are properly functioning relative to the geomorphology (e.g., gradient, size, shape, roughness, confinement, and sinuosity) and climate to provide for proper nutrient cycling, hydrologic cycling, and energy flow.*

**Evaluation and Information Sources** *(required, regardless of which box is checked):*

Data sources used for inventory and assessment of streams, palustrine meadows, and springs may include one or more of the following sources: low level (1:5,000) digital color infrared aerial photo (1998), standard (1:24,000) color air photos (1988), National Wetlands Inventory maps (1996), water rights verification photos (1997), and on-site inspections between 2002 and 2004.

All streams with perennial flow regimes were examined and rated for functioning condition. Intermittent (seasonal flow regime) and ephemeral (flowing only in response to rainfall and snow melt) stream segments were examined to determine if flow regimes verified delineations on the National Wetlands Inventory maps (1996). If obligate hydric vegetation (plant species dependent on constant presence of free water or saturated soil conditions) was not present, intermittent and/or ephemeral stream segments were not examined.

To assess stream health, technical methods developed by BLM, NRCS, and USDA Forest Service (TR-1737-9; TR-1737-12, 1998) were used as guides to define biological (plant life) and hydrological (physical) functioning condition.

To assess stream health, technical methods developed by BLM, NRCS, and USDA Forest Service (TR-1737-9; TR-1737-12, 1998) were used which define the biological (plant life) and hydrological (physical) functioning condition of streams or wetlands into five general categories. Categories include: proper functioning condition (PFC), functioning at risk with an upward trend (Risk\_U), functioning at risk with static trend (Risk\_S), functioning at risk with downward trend (Risk\_D), and non-functioning (NF).

Thirty-one separately named streams segments were examined, totaling 46 miles. Of these stream segments across public lands, 28.8 miles (63 percent) were intermittent or ephemeral flow regime systems and 17.2 miles (37 percent) were perennial flow regime systems.

**Rangeland Health**

Two stream segments, totaling 0.7 mile, cross public land within this allotment. Upon file review, it was found that four segments were named in the April 2005 Goodrich Watershed Assessment, but two segments were named in the Armacost Individual Allotment specific assessment (Appendix B, Assessment 1). A January 4, 2007 update indicated two stream segments cross the allotment as was reported in the allotment specific appendix. Those two stream segments are evaluated below.

<b>Name of Stream Segment</b>	<b>Stream Code</b>	<b>Crossing Public Land</b>	<b>Functioning Condition</b>
Badger Gulch	BADGE-000.3	0.3 miles	Proper Functioning Condition
Left Fork Creek	LFORK-000.6	0.4 miles	Proper Functioning Condition
	<b>2 stream segments</b>	<b>0.7 mile</b>	

**Rangeland Health Change**

Badger Gulch and Left Fork Creek displayed a healthy assemblage of age classes representing a diverse potential natural plant community that is appropriate for the valley type, substrates, and elevations. Stream shading levels approached 80 percent overall. Each stream segment was hydrologically stable. BADGE-000.3 and LFORK-000.6 were each rated in proper functioning condition for Standards 2 and 3.



### Livestock Grazing Management

A description of each Guideline for Livestock Grazing Management is attached to this Evaluation and Determination. Following are guidelines applicable to Standard 2 and Standard 3:

Guidelines 2, 6, and 17 (development of management facilities): Riparian and wetlands are properly functioning. At this time there are no known proposals for new range improvements.

Guidelines 4, 5, 7, 8 (grazing management practices): Livestock use of the allotment is authorized for spring use, beginning April first, on a season-long basis over 530 acres of public land for 50 AUMs.

It is documented on the Rangeland Health Evaluation Summary Worksheet that there is early spring and summer use with evidence of deer and grouse along the ridge to the east. There is also evidence of horse use.

[Check box 1, 2, 3, 4 or 5, and either box 6 or 7.]

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	6 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Conforms with Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management.
3 <input type="checkbox"/> Not Meeting the Standard, current livestock grazing management practices are not significant factors (list important causal agents)	

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)
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**Standard 4 (Native Plant Communities)**

Standard doesn't apply

*Healthy, productive, and diverse native animal habitat and populations of native plants are maintained or promoted as appropriate to soil type, climate, and landform to provide for proper nutrient cycling, hydrologic cycling, and energy flow.*

**Evaluation and Information Sources** (required, regardless of which box is checked)

To examine native plant community indicators, all ecological sites were grouped into Loamy, Shallow Stony, Very Shallow, and unclassified (forested areas) sites. All four groups are found on Armacost Individual Allotment, but only the Loamy and Shallow Stony sites received field assessments.

**Rangeland Health**

*Loamy Ecological Site, 16 to 22 inch precipitation zone; Ecological Site Number 010XY0031*

*Number of assessments: 2 (one on-site; one extrapolated)*

*Represents 63% of public land in the allotment*

Indicators	Extreme	Moderate to Extreme	Moderate	Slight to Moderate	None to Slight
Soil Surface Resistance to Erosion			1	1	
Soil Surface Loss or Degradation				1	1
Compaction Layer					2
Functional/Structural Groups				1	1
Plant Mortality/Decadence				1	1
Litter Amount					2
Annual Production				1	1
Invasive Plants				1	1
Reproductive Capability of Native Plants					2
<b>Total</b>			<b>1</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>11</b>

The dominant species is bluebunch wheatgrass. South slopes have a sparse to moderate canopy cover of xeric big sagebrush, bitterbrush and stiff sagebrush with an understory mixture of arrowleaf balsamroot, yarrow, bluebunch wheatgrass, Sandberg bluegrass, Japanese brome, and bulbous bluegrass.

Life Forms	Current Composition (biomass production estimation)		Composition at PNC*
	Less than 30% Slope	South Slope	
Graminoids (grass and grasslike)	25%	45%	50% to 60%
Forbs	40%	40%	15% to 25%
Shrubs	35%	15%	20% to 30%

\* PNC = Potential Natural Community as described in the NRCS ecological site description

*Shallow Stony Loam Ecological Site, 14 to 18 inch precipitation zone; Ecological Site #010XY018I*

*Number of assessments: 1 (extrapolated)*

*Represents 20% of public land in the allotment*

Indicators	Extreme	Moderate to Extreme	Moderate	Slight to Moderate	None to Slight
Soil Surface Resistance to Erosion					1
Soil Surface Loss or Degradation					1
Compaction Layer					1

Indicators	Extreme	Moderate to Extreme	Moderate	Slight to Moderate	None to Slight
Functional/Structural Groups					1
Plant Mortality/Decadence					1
Litter Amount					1
Annual Production			1		
Invasive Plants			1		
Reproductive Capability of Native Plants					1
<b>Total</b>			<b>2</b>		<b>7</b>

A moderate canopy cover of xeric big sagebrush and bitterbrush was found on the shallow stony site. The understory is a mixture of bulbous bluegrass, Sandberg bluegrass, and forbs (mostly arrowleaf balsamroot and yarrow). The shrub canopy is appropriate for what is expected on these sites; the understory has a moderate encroachment of invasive grasses and forbs, therefore annual production has been reduced.

Life Forms	Current Composition (biomass production estimation)	Composition at PNC*
Graminoids (grass and grasslike)	55%	75% to 80%
Forbs	15%	10% to 15%
Shrubs	30%	00% to 03%

\* PNC = Potential Natural Community as described in the NRCS ecological site description

## Rangeland Health Change

### Loamy Ecological Site

Covering approximately 324 acres (63 percent) of public lands, the loamy site has good diversity within the plant community. North slopes (approximately 108 acres) have a mixture of native and invasive species. Japanese brome and bulbous bluegrass were found scattered throughout, occupying approximately five percent of the site by composition, therefore are not posing a threat to vegetation production or composition. Steeper south slopes (approximately 216 acres) have vegetation composition and structure similar to potential natural communities.

### Shallow Stony Loam Ecological Site

Covering approximately 103 acres (20 percent) of public lands, this site has a mixture of native and invasive species. The functional or structural groups were appropriate for the site. Reproductive capability of perennial plants is good (young replacements were observed) and litter amount is within the natural range. Invasive plants tend to be smaller in nature than native bunchgrasses, therefore annual production of the site is less than would be expected, compared to the reference ecological site description.

## Livestock Grazing Management

A description of each Guideline for Livestock Grazing Management is attached to this Evaluation and Determination. Following are guidelines applicable to Standard 4:

Guidelines 4, 9, 12, and 18 (grazing management practices): Livestock use of the allotment is authorized for spring use, beginning April first, on a season-long basis over 530 acres of public land for 50 AUMs. Based on ecological site descriptions and estimated suitability, stocking rate is estimated to be 9.4 acres/AUM.

Guidelines 6, 17, and 20 (development of management facilities): At this time there are no known proposals for new range improvements. If projects are proposed in the future, these guidelines will be followed. At this time these guidelines do not apply to livestock management on this Allotment.

Guidelines 14, 15, and 16 (rehabilitation): If possible, natural regeneration will be allowed following a wildfire. If a seeding would be needed, future wildfire rehabilitation projects will include native seeds, as

much as economically possibly and as seed availability permits. Seed mixes will represent the appropriate ecosystem diversity. If projects are proposed in the future, these guidelines will be followed. At this time these guidelines do not apply to livestock management on this Allotment.

It is documented on the Rangeland Health Evaluation Summary Worksheet that there is early spring and summer use with evidence of deer and grouse along the ridge to the east.

**Conformance Rationale for Standard 4 and applicable Guidelines for Native Plant Communities**

Based on GIS mapping, the 514 acres of public land within Armacost Individual Allotment constitute approximately 36 percent of the allotment. Majority of the rangeland health indicators were found to be within an acceptable range of similarity to the ecological site descriptions prepared by NRCS. Although bulbous bluegrass and Japanese brome are scattered through the plant community, these grasses are not posing a threat to the overall health of the native plant community. Therefore, this allotment is in conformance with the native plant community rangeland health standard and grazing management guidelines.

[Check box 1, 2, 3, 4 or 5, and either box 6 or 7.]

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)

**Standard 5: Seedings**

Standard doesn't apply

*Rangelands seeded with mixtures, including predominately non-native plants, are functioning to maintain life form diversity, production, native animal habitat, nutrient cycling, energy flow, and the hydrologic cycle.*

**Evaluation and Information Sources (required, when boxes 1 through 7 are checked)**

Based on field assessments, aerial photos, and file information, no seedings were found on this allotment.

**Standard 6: Exotic plant communities, other than seedings**  Standard doesn't apply

*Exotic plant communities, other than seedings, will meet minimum requirements of soil stability and maintenance of existing native and seeded plants.*

**Evaluation and Information Sources (required regardless of which box is checked)**

Based on field assessments and other field observations, and the use of aerial photos, no exotic plant communities were found on this allotment.

**Standard 7: Water Quality**

Standard doesn't apply

*Surface and ground water on public lands comply with the Idaho Water Quality Standards.*

**Evaluation and Information Sources** *(required, regardless of which box is checked)*

Data sources used for inventory and assessment of streams, palustrine meadows, and springs may include one or more of the following sources: low level (1:5,000) digital color infrared aerial photo (1998), standard (1:24,000) color air photos (1988), National Wetlands Inventory maps (1996), water rights verification photos (1997), and on-site inspections between 2002 and 2004.

All streams with perennial flow regimes were examined and rated for functioning condition. Intermittent (seasonal flow regime) and ephemeral (flowing only in response to rainfall and snow melt) stream segments were examined to determine if flow regimes verified delineations on the National Wetlands Inventory maps (1996). If obligate hydric vegetation (plant species dependent on constant presence of free water or saturated soil conditions) was not present, intermittent and/or ephemeral stream segments were not rated for proper functioning condition.

Thirty-one separately named streams segments were examined, totaling 46 miles. Of these stream segments across public lands, 28.8 miles (63 percent) were intermittent or ephemeral flow regime systems and 17.2 miles (37 percent) were perennial flow regime systems.

**Rangeland Health**

Two stream segments are found on this allotment. Left Fork Creek and Badger Gulch do not appear on The Clean Water Act IDEQ (303d) 1998 list of water quality limited stream segments. Left Fork Creek is a perennial stream, where Badger Gulch has seasonal/intermittent flows. Left Fork Creek met standards for cold water biota and salmonid spawning. Badger Gulch met standards for seasonal cold water biota.

**Rangeland Health Change**

Left Fork Creek and Badger Gulch each met applicable IDEQ Standards for support of cold water biota. Left Fork, a salmonid bearing stream, met applicable temperature standards for salmonid spawning and cold water biota.

**Livestock Grazing Management**

A description of each Guideline for Livestock Grazing Management is attached to this Evaluation and Determination. Following are guidelines applicable to Standard 7:

Guidelines 6 and 17 *(development of management facilities)*: At this time there are no known proposals for new range improvements. If projects are proposed in the future, these guidelines will be followed, however at this time these guidelines do not apply.

Guideline 10 *(grazing management practices)*: Livestock use of the allotment is authorized for spring use, beginning April first, on a season-long basis over 530 acres of public land for 50 AUMs.

It is documented on the Rangeland Health Evaluation Summary Worksheet that there is early spring and summer use with evidence of deer and grouse along the ridge to the east.

[Check box 1, 2, 3, 4 or 5, and either box 6 or 7.]

1 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Meeting the Standard	5 <input type="checkbox"/> Not Meeting the Standard, cause not
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2 <input type="checkbox"/> Not Meeting the Standard, but making significant progress towards	determined
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)

### **Standard 8: Threatened and Endangered Plants and Animals**

Standard doesn't apply

*Habitats are suitable to maintain viable populations of threatened and endangered, sensitive, and other special status species.*

#### **Evaluation and Information Sources (required, regardless of which box is checked)**

##### Plants

There are currently no known populations of threatened, endangered, or sensitive plant species in Armacost Individual Allotment.

#### **Rangeland Health**

##### Wildlife

Upon review of the RMP and special status species databases, no crucial wildlife habitat has been identified in the area surrounding the allotment. Wildlife habitat condition and quality was inferred from data collected while examining the allotment for Standards 1, 2, 3, 4, and 7.

Armacost Allotment provides adequate habitat for upland dependent special status species. The majority of special status species habitat is near potential for the site. Introduced grasses are not as desirable for wildlife as native perennial grasses, but do provide a structural component. Riparian areas were in proper functioning condition with a diversity of plant age-classes which provides quality habitat for riparian dependent special status animal species as well as nesting neo-tropical migrant birds.

##### Fisheries

Left Fork Creek supported healthy viable populations of redband trout, a BLM sensitive species. Stream fisheries habitat and Pfankuch ratings were “good.” The flow regime is intermittent through the public land segment of Badger Gulch, and no salmonid fishery was present there. There are no known populations of threatened and endangered fish species, including bull trout (*Salvelinus confluentus*), in Left Fork Creek or Badger Gulch.

Weiser River Watershed upstream from the confluence of the Little Weiser River is identified as a component of the Southwest Idaho bull trout core habitat. Hornet Creek from the confluence with Weiser River to upper watershed along the mainstem is proposed bull trout critical habitat. Within this allotment, HUC’s 170501240902 and 170501240904 are identified as bull trout proposed critical habitat. The Weiser River Core Area includes the watersheds upstream of the confluence with the Little Weiser River. Spawning and rearing occurs primarily in the upper watersheds. Bull trout, in this core area, are primarily resident fish with relatively low numbers of migratory fish.

Columbia River bull trout (*Salvelinus confluentus*) were listed as a threatened species under the Endangered Species Act in 1998. Metapopulations (local) of bull trout have been documented in the Upper Weiser River subbasin and tributaries including Little Weiser River, East Fork Weiser River and the Hornet Creek watershed. Connectivity between these metapopulations is reduced due to physical barriers (culverts).

On Wednesday, October 6, 2004 USFWS published the final rule on designation of critical habitat for Klamath River and Columbia River populations of bull trout in the Federal Register (Vol. 69 No. 193, 50 CFR Part 17). The final ruling designated portions of Wildhorse River, Indian Creek, and Crooked River as critical habitat, and dropped other streams that were previously proposed, including all streams within the Goodrich assessment area. However, BLM policy directs that streams or segments of streams which were proposed for listing as critical habitat will continue to have important status, and will be managed as if they were listed to avoid jeopardizing the species. “Critical habitat designations do not signal that habitat outside the designation area is unimportant to bull trout. Areas outside the critical habitat designation will continue to be subject to conservation actions that may be implemented under section 7(a) (1), and regulatory protections afforded by the section 7(b) jeopardy standard, and the section 9 take prohibition, as determined on the basis of the best available information at the time of the action” (Federal Register, Vol. 69 No. 193 pp.60022).

## **Rangeland Health Change**

### Wildlife

Bulbous bluegrass and Japanese brome are scattered through the plant community, but these grasses are not posing a threat to the overall health of wildlife habitat.

### Fisheries

Streams on Armacost Individual Allotment are providing suitable habitat and water quality for resident redband trout populations.

## **Livestock Grazing Management**

A description of each Guideline for Livestock Grazing Management is attached to this Evaluation and Determination. Following are guidelines applicable to Standard 8:

Guidelines 6, 17, and 20 (development of management facilities): At this time there are no known proposals for new range improvements. If projects are proposed in the future, these guidelines will be followed. At this time these guidelines do not apply to livestock management on this Allotment.

Guidelines 11, 12, and 18 (grazing management practices): Livestock use of the allotment is authorized for spring use, beginning April first, on a season-long basis over 530 acres of public land for 50 AUMs.

Guidelines 14, 15, and 16 (rehabilitation): If possible, natural regeneration will be allowed following a wildfire. If a seeding would be needed, future wildfire rehabilitation projects will include native seeds, as much as economically possible and as seed availability permits. Seed mixes will represent the appropriate ecosystem diversity. If projects are proposed in the future, these guidelines will be followed. At this time these guidelines do not apply to livestock management on this Allotment.

It is documented on the Rangeland Health Evaluation Summary Worksheet that there is early spring and summer use with evidence of deer and grouse along the ridge to the east.

## **Conformance Rationale for Standard 8 and applicable guidelines for Threatened and Endangered Plants and Animals**

Management of special status plants, fish, and animals is directly related to managing a healthy watershed, native plant communities, and, riparian areas. Livestock management guidelines that are

related to rangeland health standards also apply to special status species habitats. It was indicated above that all current livestock grazing is in compliance with applicable livestock grazing management guidelines for special status species habitat within Armacost Individual Allotment.

[Check box 1, 2, 3, 4 or 5, and either box 6 or 7.]

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)

**Field Manager’s Determination Rationale:**

Based on information detailed in Appendix B, Assessment 1 of April 2005, Goodrich Watershed Assessment (allotments with blocked units of public land) and summarized above, I have determined that all applicable Standards for Rangeland Health (1, 2, 3, 4, 7, and 8) and Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management are being met.

Rangeland health data was collected through one field assessment and extrapolated from two field assessments performed on the neighboring allotment. Determinations of rangeland health and conformance with applicable standards and guidelines are made on an allotment as a whole unit. Therefore, Armacost Individual Allotment is meeting health standards for watersheds, riparian areas, and native plant communities, and all applicable grazing management guidelines.

/s/ Rosemary Thomas

09/28/2007

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Rosemary Thomas  
Four Rivers Field Manager

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date