

Appendix A27 Pleasant Ridge Group

1.0 Introduction

The Pleasant Ridge Group is a composite of two allotments and two pastures from a third allotment that are used by a single permittee. Although the allotments are currently authorized as separate units, the entire “Group” is managed together in a rotational grazing system. The affected allotments and pastures, along with their associated acreage are shown in the following table:

Pleasant Ridge Group Allotments	Acreage, per the 1988 RMP		
	Public Land	Private Land	State Land
Home Ranch #132	1,138	2,440	0
Lake Ranch #133	980	1,480	0
Robinson Gulch Pasture	560	320	640
Traction Gulch Pasture	80	160	0
TOTAL	2,758	4,400	640

Through the Evaluation and Determination, it was determined that

- Livestock management is in conformance with the Watershed (#1), Native Plant Communities (#4), Water Quality (#7), and Threatened and Endangered Species (#8) standards;
- Livestock management is not a factor in the non-conformance to Riparian Areas (#2) and Stream Channels and Flood Plains (#3) standards;
- Compliance with all applicable guidelines for livestock grazing management is being achieved.

2.0 Description of the Alternatives

The Pleasant Ridge Group of allotments and pastures is managed by one permittee. Seven pastures are used in a rotational system from mid-April through the first of June. An eighth pasture is used for fall gathering during the month of November, and the ninth pasture is used for winter feeding and calving.

2.1 Alternative A – No Action /Continue Current Management

Livestock grazing management would continue, with the current grazing permit expiring February 28, 2015. Mandatory terms and conditions of the grazing permit are:

Allotment	Livestock	Season of Use	Percent Public Land	Grazing Preference		
				Active	Suspended	Total
Home Ranch #132	175 Cattle	04/10 to 06/01	22%	101	0	219
	175 Cattle	09/15 to 11/15	33%	118		
Lake Ranch #133	74 Cattle	04/10 to 10/15	44%	204	0	204
Hornet Creek #152						
Robinson Gulch Pasture	8 Cattle	04/16 to 11/30	100%	60	0	68
Traction Gulch Pasture	1 Cattle	04/16 to 11/30	100%	8		

Following are allotment specific terms and conditions attached to the grazing permit:

1. Your certified Actual Use Report is due within 15 days of completing your authorized annual grazing use.
2. Salt and/or supplement shall not be placed within one-quarter (1/4) mile of springs, streams, meadows, aspen stands, playas or water developments.
3. Changes to the scheduled use require prior approval.
4. Trailing activities must be coordinated with the BLM prior to initiation. A trailing permit or similar authorization may be required prior to crossing public lands.
5. Livestock exclosures located within your grazing allotment(s) are closed to all domestic grazing use.
6. Range improvements must be maintained in accordance with the cooperative agreements and range improvements permits in which you are a signator or assignee. All maintenance of range improvements within a Wilderness Study Area requires prior consultation with the Authorized Officer.
7. All appropriate documentation regarding base property leases, lands offered for exchange-of-use, and livestock control agreements must be approved prior to turn-out. Leases of land and/or livestock must be notarized prior to submission and be in compliance with Boise District Policy
8. Failure to pay the grazing bill within 15 days of the due date specified shall result in a late fee assessment of \$25.00 or 10 percent of the grazing bill, whichever is greater, not to exceed 250.00 payment. Payment made later than 15 days after the due date, shall include the appropriate late fee assessment. Failure to make payment within 30 days may be a violation of 43 CFR 4140.(b)(1) and shall result in action by the Authorized Officer under 43 CFR 4150.1 and 4160.1-2.

2.2 Alternative B – Proposed Action

Under the Proposed Action, the Pleasant Ridge Group, consisting of Home Ranch Allotment #132, Lake Ranch Allotment #133, and the Robinson Gulch and Traction Gulch pastures of the Hornet Creek Allotment #152 would be consolidated into one allotment, which would be called the Pleasant Ridge Allotment #1364.

Based on field mapping of existing fences and information provided by the permittee, acreage for the Pleasant Ridge Group has been recalculated. There are now 547 more acres of public land, 440 fewer acres of private land, and 31 fewer acres of state land within the proposed allotment boundary than are shown in the RMP. The proposed Pleasant Ridge Allotment now contains approximately 7,874 acres, including 3,305 acres of public land (42 percent), 3,960 acres of private land (50 percent), and 609 acres of state land (8 percent). These revised acres reflect the most accurate and up-to-date information, and would be used for the new term permit, as follows:

Pleasant Ridge Allotments	Acreage, per GIS		
	Public Land	Private Land	Idaho Department of Lands
Home Ranch #132	1,910	2,410	0
Lake Ranch #133	755	1,080	0
Robinson Gulch Pasture	560	280	609
Traction Gulch Pasture	80	190	0
TOTAL	3,305	3,960	609

To incorporate updated allotment information and current grazing management guidance, it is proposed to:

1. Consolidate Home Ranch Allotment #132, Lake Ranch Allotment #133, and Robinson Gulch and Traction Gulch Pastures from Hornet Creek Allotment #152 into one allotment known as Pleasant Ridge Allotment #1364;
2. Modify the allotment boundary to correspond to existing fencelines;
3. Modify the percent public land term of the grazing permit to 42 percent;
4. Renew the grazing permit showing maximum authorizations for livestock numbers, season-of-use, and AUMs (each of these columns would be stand-alone sections of the permit therefore standard method for calculating AUMs would not apply). Annual flexibility of livestock numbers and/or season-of-use would be allowed based on seasonal circumstances (example - range readiness; variations in permittee's management; but not limited to these situations). Management flexibility would be allowed provided livestock use remains within the sideboards of maximum livestock numbers and season-of-use, and without exceeding authorized AUMs. Rotational grazing would be conducted in such a manner that periodic rest or deferment during the critical growth stages would be provided (Guideline #4). To provide rest or deferment, public lands would not be grazed during the critical growth period, of May 01 through June 30, in consecutive years.
5. Use Annual Indicators as a tool to insure continued conformance with Idaho Standards for Rangeland Health and Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management.

Based on the proposed action, livestock grazing would continue to be authorized for a maximum of 491 AUMs. Seasons of use would be modified as follows:

Spring season would extend from April 15 through June 30

Fall season would extend from October 01 through November 30

Cattle would be moved through the nine pastures of the Pleasant Ridge Allotment in a systematic manner both before and following use on adjacent Forest Service areas. Terms and conditions necessary to regulate grazing activities on public land would be added to the grazing permit. Annual Indicators would be used to describe utilization criteria. Term of the renewed grazing permit would be for ten years, from March 01, 2009 to February 28, 2019, as follows:

Allotment	Livestock	Season of Use	Percent Public Land	Grazing Preference		
				Active	Suspended	Total
Pleasant Ridge #1364	425 Cattle	04/15 to 06/30 10/01 to 11/30	42%	491	0	491

Following are allotment specific Terms and Conditions to be attached to the grazing permit:

1. Livestock grazing for Pleasant Ridge Allotment will comply with Field Manager's Decision that became final on (intentionally left blank at this time, date to be inserted when the decision becomes final).
2. Authorized AUMs would not be exceeded on public lands. Livestock numbers and season of use, as shown above, indicate maximums that would be allowed under this permit. Permittee has discretion to manage within these numbers, provided overuse does not occur on public land.

3. Changes to the scheduled use require prior approval, on an annual basis.
4. The Annual Grazing Use Report (BLM Form 4130-5) must be properly completed, signed, dated and submitted within 15 days of completing your authorized annual grazing use.
5. Annual maintenance of range improvements would be completed prior to livestock entry of the allotment.
6. Livestock turn-out is subject to Boise District range readiness criteria.
7. Pursuant to 43 CFR 10.4(b), permittee must notify the BLM Field Manager, by telephone followed with written confirmation, immediately upon discovery of human remains, funerary objects, sacred objects, or objects of cultural patrimony on federal land. Pursuant to 43 CFR 10.4(c), permittee must immediately stop any ongoing activities connected with the discovery and make a reasonable effort to protect discovered remains or object.
8. Salt and/or mineral blocks shall not be placed on public lands within one quarter (1/4) mile of springs, streams, meadows, riparian habitats or aspen stands.

Flexibility

Scheduled turn out dates by pasture may be adjusted based on Range Readiness and Annual Indicators. Grazing schedule adjustments require prior approval from the Authorized Officer.

Based on the results of monitoring associated with Annual Grazing Use Indicators, periodic modifications to authorized grazing management may be imposed. Monitoring data collected would be used to ensure adherence with Annual Indicators, listed below. Modifications may include, but are not limited to: duration of grazing use by pasture, and/or reducing livestock numbers by pasture. These modifications would be coordinated annually with the permittee and incorporated into the annual authorization.

Annual Indicators

Adherence to the annual indicators listed below, and the prescribed grazing management program are expected to make progress towards meeting, and maintaining achievement of the Standards for Rangeland Health and land use plan objectives. Periodic collection, evaluation, and interpretation of monitoring data would provide an indication of the potential success of the grazing management prescription.

1. Average utilization by livestock on key bunchgrass species would not exceed 40 percent during the period of critical growth (May 1 through June 30), and 50 percent outside the critical growth period.
2. Utilization on shrubs would not exceed 30 percent of current year's production as determined by Browse Removal Method, or other approved methods.
3. Annually maintain a median of six-inches or more of residual stubble height on herbaceous riparian vegetation along Robinson Gulch (segment ROBIS-000.9) throughout the growing season.
4. Bank alteration from foraging or trailing livestock along Robinson Gulch (segment ROBIS-000.9) would be limited to 15 percent or less.

Long Term Indicator Criteria for Riparian Areas

1. Increase riparian plant cover, particularly late seral sedges, rushes, and willows on stream banks as measured on riparian trend (Greenline) transects;

2. Increase bank stability to 85 percent or more, as measured on riparian trend (Greenline) transects;
3. Decrease in greenline to greenline channel width (width/depth ratio).

3.0 Affected Environment and Environmental Consequences

Affected environment is discussed in the main body of this EA, with additional information provided below.

3.1 Vegetation

3.1.1 Affected Environment – Vegetation

Biotic integrity of the native plant community is intact. The plant community is healthy, diverse, and functioning appropriately.

3.1.2 Environmental Consequences – Vegetation

3.1.2.1 Alternative A

The Idaho rangeland health standard for native plant communities is being met on this allotment. Livestock grazing management under this alternative is expected to continue to meet the standard by maintaining or promoting healthy productive and diverse native animal habitat and populations of native plants appropriate to soil type, vegetation, climate and landform to provide proper nutrient cycling, hydrologic cycling and energy flow.

3.1.2.2 Alternative B

The Idaho rangeland health standard for native plant communities is being met on this allotment. Livestock grazing management changes proposed under this alternative are expected to continue to meet the standard by maintaining or promoting healthy productive and diverse native animal habitat and populations of native plants appropriate to soil type, vegetation, climate and landform to provide proper nutrient cycling, hydrologic cycling and energy flow.

3.2 Soils

3.2.1 Affected Environment – Soils

Soil site stability and hydrologic function are adequate and appropriate to maintain healthy and diverse perennial plant communities.

3.2.2 Environmental Consequences – Soils

3.2.2.1 Alternative A

The Idaho rangeland health standard for watersheds, based on soil site stability and hydrologic function, is being met on this allotment. Livestock grazing management under this alternative is expected to continue to meet the standard by promoting proper infiltration, retention, and release of water appropriate to soil type, vegetation, climate and landform to provide proper nutrient cycling, hydrologic cycling and energy flow.

3.2.2.2 Alternative B

The Idaho rangeland health standard for watersheds, based on soil site stability and hydrologic function, is being met on this allotment. Livestock grazing management changes proposed under

this alternative are expected to continue to meet the standard by promoting proper infiltration, retention, and release of water appropriate to soil type, vegetation, climate and landform to provide proper nutrient cycling, hydrologic cycling and energy flow.

3.3 Wildlife – Including Special Status Animal Species

3.3.1 Affected Environment – Wildlife – Including Special Status Animal Species

Northern Idaho ground squirrels, a threatened federal species, have been observed adjacent to Lake Ranch as recently as 2004, but none are known from Federal lands in the allotment.

3.3.2 Environmental Consequences – Wildlife – Including Special Status Animal Species

3.3.2.1 Alternative A

The Idaho rangeland health standard for special status animal species is being met on Home Ranch Allotment, Lake Ranch Allotment, and Hornet Creek Allotment pastures. Livestock grazing management under this alternative is expected to continue to meet the standard by maintaining or promoting healthy productive and diverse native animal habitat and populations of native plants appropriate to soil type, vegetation, climate and landform. There would be no effect on Northern Idaho ground squirrels or their habitat.

3.3.2.2 Alternative B

The Idaho rangeland health standard for special status animal species is being met on Home Ranch Allotment, Lake Ranch Allotment, and Hornet Creek Allotment pastures. Livestock grazing management under this alternative is expected to continue to meet the standard by maintaining or promoting healthy productive and diverse native animal habitat and populations of native plants appropriate to soil type, vegetation, climate and landform. There would be no effect on Northern Idaho ground squirrels or their habitat.

3.4 Riparian Areas, Water Quality, and Fisheries

3.4.1 Affected Environment – Riparian Areas, Water Quality, and Fisheries

Approximately 0.5 mile of Long Gulch and 0.3 mile of Robinson Gulch flow through public land in the Robinson Gulch Pasture of Hornet Creek Allotment. Long Gulch was rated in proper functioning condition for Standard 2 (vegetation) and Standard 3 (hydrology). Robinson Gulch was rated in functioning-at-risk condition with strong upward trend for Standard 2 and functioning-at-risk with moderate downward trend for Standard 3. Livestock grazing was not a factor. Mechanical disturbance was a factor.

Robinson Gulch has been recently modified by the addition of large volumes of soil, hawthorn, and other woody vegetation which was uprooted and bull-dozed from the active floodplain and placed in, or along, the stream. Those areas which are still accessible to livestock have little vegetation present to stabilize stream banks. Vegetation recovery in the disturbed area is currently repressed by the dense piles of brush and little living woody vegetating remains along the active channel.

Modification of Robinson Gulch has eliminated natural access to the floodplain by seasonal flooding stream flows. This may increase water velocity and flow volume within the artificially confined channel during flood stage. This increased shear stress may result in lateral and vertical instability, increase sediment, and may eventually cause formation of headcuts. Natural sinuosity is restricted by the brush and soil windrows along the stream. Width/depth ratios, pool frequency, and general channel geometry is inappropriate for this stream and valley type. Sediment levels were very high due to the addition of fine soil into and adjacent to the stream.

Water quality standards for seasonal cold water biota were met. Robinson Gulch does not support a fishery.

LONGG-000.1

LONGG-000.1 was hydrologically stable and was in proper functioning condition for Standard 2 (riparian vegetation) and Standard e (hydrology).

This stream segment displayed a healthy and diverse mixture of woody vegetation types which represented the potential natural plant community for this ecological site, elevation, and intermittent stream flow regime.

Water quality standards for seasonal cold water biota were met. Robinson Gulch does not support a fishery.

3.4.2 Environmental Consequences – Riparian Areas, Water Quality, and Fisheries

3.4.2.1 Alternative A

Robinson Gulch would remain in an upward trend for Standard 2 over the short through long terms. However, as the stream will take some time to adjust to the modified channel, the stream would likely continue in a downward trend for Standard 3 over the short term. It is expected that in 10 years the stream would be in an upward trend for Standard 3.

Long Gulch would remain in proper-functioning-condition over the short through long term.

Water quality standards for seasonal cold water biota would continue to be met in both Robinson and Long Gulch. Neither stream supports a fishery.

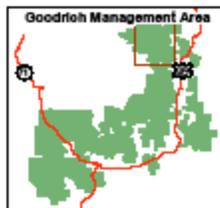
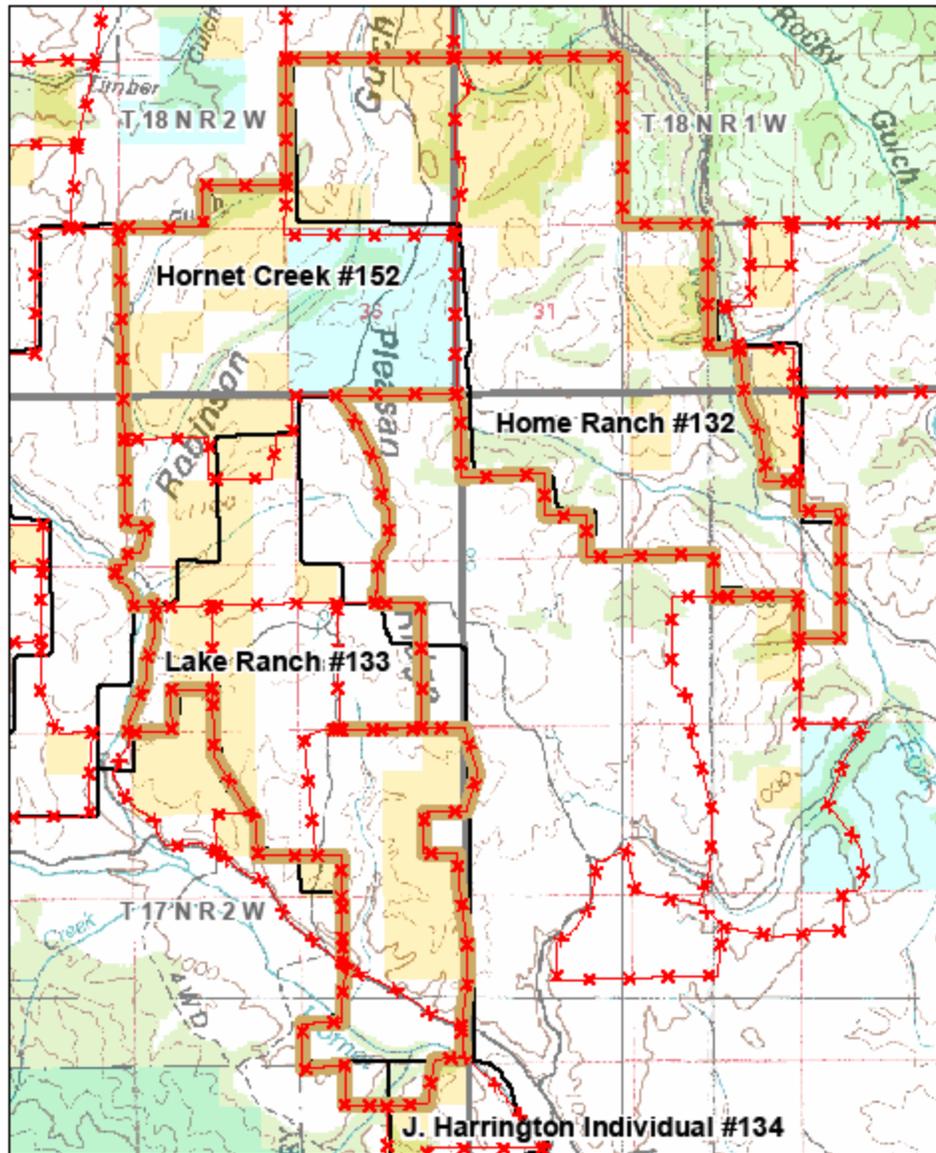
3.4.2.2 Alternative B

Robinson Gulch would remain in an upward trend for Standard 2 over the short through long terms. However, as the stream will take some time to adjust to the modified channel, the stream would likely continue in a downward trend for Standard 3 over the short term. It is expected that in 10 years the stream would be in an upward trend for Standard 3.

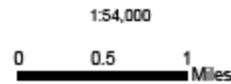
Long Gulch would remain in proper-functioning-condition over the short through long term.

Water quality standards for seasonal cold water biota would continue to be met in both Robinson and Long Gulch. Neither stream supports a fishery.

Pleasant Ridge Allotment #1364



Map Legend	
	Fence
	Proposed Allotment Boundary
	1988 Management Plan
	BLM
	USFS
	State
	Private



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