

Appendix A17 Jackson Creek Allotment #158

1.0 Introduction

According to the RMP, the 5,049 acre Jackson Creek #158 Allotment contains approximately 1,514 acres of public land, 1,800 acres of private land, and 1,735 acres of State land. Public land is intermingled with other lands throughout the allotment; public has access to the public land.

Fences are in place to manage the allotment in a five pasture rotation system. The previous permittee reportedly grazed the allotment each year with 400 yearlings from April 10 to July 15, with use occurring for three to four weeks in each pasture. Around May 10, approximately 200 head would be removed, with the remaining 200 head removed around July 10. The holding pasture was used between October 15 and November 15 to allow cattle to drift through on their way home from the forest, staying in the pasture for two to three days. This grazing system was not formalized into a written management plan, nor was it ever observed in practice by BLM staff when monitoring the allotment.

Through the Evaluation and Determination, it was determined that:

- Livestock management is contributing to the non-conformance with the Watershed (#1), Native Plant Communities (#4), and Threatened and Endangered Species (#8) standards;
- Compliance with all applicable guidelines for livestock grazing management is not being achieved (numbers 1, 3, 4, 8, 9, 11, 12, 18).

2.0 Description of the Alternatives

2.1 Alternative A – No Action /Continue Current Management

Livestock grazing authorization would continue under season-long management, 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
Jackson Creek #158	140 Cattle	04/10 to 06/09	100%	281	0	389
	27 Cattle	06/10 to 10/09		108		

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

1. This is Fenced Federal Range and may be grazed concurrently with private lands as long as grazing use is not detrimental to the federal range.
2. Fees are due on the date specified on the grazing bill. Failure to pay your grazing bill within 15 days of the due date specified in the bill 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. Upon failure to make payment within this 30 days livestock may be considered in trespass.
3. As provided in the Code of Federal Regulations CFR 4130.6-2d, you are hereby required to submit a certified Actual Use Report within 15 days after completion of your annual

grazing use. Failure to comply could result in the cancellation of your permit in whole or part.

4. Livestock exclosures located within your grazing allotments are closed to all domestic grazing use. It is your responsibility to keep the fences in good repair where maintenance has been assigned to you. Permittees who willingly cause and willingly allow their livestock to graze in exclosures closed to grazing will be charged with trespass.
5. Salt and/or mineral blocks shall not be placed on public lands within one-quarter (¼) mile of springs, streams meadows, riparian habitats or aspen stands.
6. All appropriate documentation regarding State and/or private leased lands, private lands offered for exchange-of-use, and livestock control agreements must be approved by the authorized officer prior to allowing livestock to graze on public lands.
7. The turn-out date shown above will be subject to range readiness. Range readiness occurs once the soils have firmed after the spring thaw, and the physiological requirements of the plants have been met. A copy of the range readiness guidelines is available upon request.
8. Turn-out is subject to Boise District range readiness criteria
9. Changes to the scheduled use requires prior approval
10. 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.
11. Range improvements must be maintained in accordance with the cooperative agreements and range improvement 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.

2.2 Alternative B – Proposed Action

The acreage for Jackson Creek Allotment #158 has been recalculated based on field mapping of existing fences and information provided by the permittee. These revised acres reflect the most accurate and up-to-date information, and would be used for the new term permit. Base property for Jackson Creek Allotment has been sold; one of the new owners has applied to transfer all the grazing privileges and to make management changes. To finalize the transfer request, and to incorporate updated allotment information and current grazing management guidance, it is proposed to:

1. Delete from the allotment those private and State lands located north of the Jackson Creek Pasture and east of the Center Pasture;
2. Transfer 545 acres of public land from the Isom Allotment #159 into the Jackson Creek Allotment #158. The 545 acres of public land, as well as fenced-in state and private land will become the North Pasture;
3. Adjust the allotment boundary to correspond with existing fencelines;
Based on field mapping of existing fences and information provided by the permittee, the Jackson Creek Allotment now contains approximately 4,319 acres, including 2,080 acres of public land (48 percent), 1,008 acres of private land (23 percent), and 1,231 acres of State land (29 percent) in four pastures. These new boundaries result in 566 more acres of public land, 792 fewer acres of private land, and 504 fewer acres of State land than are shown in the RMP.
4. Modify the percent public land term of the grazing permit to 48 percent;

5. Modify the current grazing preference from 389 active AUMs to 269 active AUMs and 120 suspended AUMs. If it is shown, through subsequent monitoring, that the allotment has improved ecologically and can support additional grazing, a portion or all of the suspended AUMs may be activated;
6. Early and late Spring grazing in the Jackson Creek and Johnson Creek Pastures would alternate on an annual basis;
7. Grazing in the North and Center pastures would occur during the dormant season each Fall.

Grazing Season	Approximate Use Dates	Description
Spring	May 1 to June 30	Early and late Spring grazing in the Jackson Creek and Johnson Creek Pastures would alternate on an annual basis.
Fall	Oct 16 to Nov 30	Cattle would be trailed back from the Forest, over an approximate 1½ month period, and would be held for transport to their winter pasture. North Pasture and Center Pasture would be the primary use pastures during the fall period.

8. 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.
 - a. Although the permit would show that maximum livestock numbers across the entire allotment would be 250 head, an interim maximum of 160 head would be imposed until such time as progress toward conformance with applicable standards is documented. Additional livestock numbers and AUMs could be added as monitoring shows improvement in soil and vegetative conditions.
9. Use Annual Indicators to insure that the allotment is making progress towards meeting Idaho Standards for Rangeland Health and Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management.

Based on the proposed action, livestock grazing would be authorized for a maximum of 269 AUMs from April 20 to June 15 and from October 16 to November 30. 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. The grazing permit would be renewed for a term of ten years, from March 01, 2009 to February 28, 2019, as follows:

Allotment	Livestock (maximum)	Season of Use (maximum)	Percent Public Land	Grazing Preference		
				Active	Suspended	Total
Jackson Creek #158	250 Cattle	04/20 to 06/15 10/16 to 11/30	48%	154 115	120	389

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

1. Livestock grazing for Jackson Creek 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. Although the permit is for a maximum livestock number of 250 head across the entire allotment, an interim maximum number of 160 head is imposed until such time as progress toward conformance with applicable standards is documented.
3. 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.
4. Changes to the scheduled use require prior approval, on an annual basis.
5. Properly complete, sign and date an Annual Grazing Use Report (BLM Form 4130-5). The completed form must be submitted within 15 days from the end of the annual authorized use period.
6. Annual maintenance of range improvements would be completed prior to livestock entry of the allotment.
7. Livestock turn-out is subject to Boise District range readiness criteria.
8. 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 (as defined in 43 CFR 10.2) 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.
9. 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 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. Bank alteration along Jackson Creek would be limited to less than 15 percent.

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

The Idaho rangeland health standard for native plant communities is not being met on this allotment. Areas of resource issues, regarding the biotic integrity of the native plant community, exists throughout the allotment. High shrub mortality and decadence, and invasive exotic species were observed throughout the allotment. The Idaho noxious weeds rush skeletonweed and Scotch thistle have been observed throughout the allotment. Utilization data identifies that heavy and severe use has occurred on some key species and landscape methods indicate use on the high side of the moderate category.

3.1.2 Environmental Consequences – Vegetation

3.1.2.1 Alternative A

Livestock grazing management under this alternative is expected to continue to not meet the standard by not 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

Changes to livestock grazing management practices proposed under this alternative would be a temporary reduction in active AUMs, implementation of a rotational grazing system, and fall use

only along Jackson Creek are expected to improve the health and diversity of the vegetation and make progress towards meeting 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

The watershed is not currently functioning adequately or appropriately due to and shifts in composition and distribution of the plant community which alters the ability of a site to retain moisture and control runoff. Compounding this problem was the occurrence of invasive exotic plant species. The common thread of soil disturbance and depleted plant communities across the allotment presents sufficient cause that current livestock management is not conducive to maintaining a thriving perennial plant community that is capable of providing soil protection and moisture retention. In the current condition, adequate nutrient and energy cycling is not occurring to maintain watershed health.

3.2.2 Environmental Consequences – Soils

3.2.2.1 Alternative A

Livestock grazing management under this alternative is expected to continue to not meet the standard by not promoting proper infiltration, retention, and release of water appropriate to soil type, vegetation, climate and landform to provides proper nutrient cycling, hydrologic cycling and energy flow.

3.2.2.2 Alternative B

Changes to livestock grazing management practices proposed under this alternative would be a temporary reduction in active AUMs, implementation of a rotational grazing system, and fall use only along Jackson Creek are expected to make improvements to the watershed, and soil resource and make progress towards meeting the standard

3.3 Wildlife – Including Special Status Animal Species

3.3.1 Affected Environment – Wildlife – Including Special Status Animal Species

Jackson Creek Allotment is within designated greater sage-grouse range and is potential habitat for Columbian sharp-tailed grouse. Additionally mule deer, elk, and black bear use the allotment. The Idaho rangeland health standard for special status animal species is not being met on this allotment.

3.3.2 Environmental Consequences – Wildlife – Including Special Status Animal Species

3.3.2.1 Alternative A

Livestock grazing management under this alternative is expected to continue to not meet the standard by not maintaining or promoting healthy productive and diverse native animal habitat and populations of native plants appropriate to soil type, vegetation, climate and landform.

3.3.2.2 Alternative B

Livestock grazing management changes proposed under this alternative are expected to make improvements to the vegetation and progress towards meeting 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. A reduction in the active authorization, from 389 to 269 active AUMs and 120 suspended AUMs is proposed. The western portion of Isom Allotment would be assigned to Jackson Creek Allotment and incorporated into a rotation system. Both of these actions will have a positive effect on special status animal habitat over the long-term. Progress is expected to be slow and may take the full 10 years of the permit to manifest change.

3.4 Riparian Areas, Water Quality, and Fisheries

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

Vegetation along Jackson Creek had remnant components of the potential natural plant community present. Age classes of woody vegetation were confined mostly to old and decadent classes, and no younger willows were present. Plant species were dominated by grazing disturbance induced types composed of black hawthorn, Wood's rose, and spirea. Other woody species present include arroyo willow, chokecherry, syringa, nine-bark, and a few old and dying cottonwood trees located on the secondary stream terrace. No sedges or rushes were found as this stream has a seasonal flow regime. The stream is in hydraulic disequilibrium. The streambed substrates are very coarse, and lack the finer soils necessary to support sedges and rushes. Many weedy annuals populated the stream terraces including hounds-tongue (*Cynoglossum officianalis*) a State of Idaho listed noxious weed species, mullein, and many others. Grasses were mostly restricted to annuals such as bulbous bluegrass, Kentucky bluegrass, and Japanese brome.

Overall, plant health and vigor was low. This is likely due in part to many years of drought, combined with very heavy browsing of woody plant species in the riparian areas. Browsing on many shrubs was heavy, approaching or exceeding 90 percent of current year's leader growth. This has contributed to reduced plant densities and recruitment of deep rooted plants necessary to stabilize bare stream banks along portions of this stream.

Jackson Creek drains a 2,500 acre watershed at this location. No springs contribute flow to this reach, and the stream has an intermittent flow regime (*IDAPA 58.01.02.003.51*). Stream channel characteristics (types) varied considerably along this segment. Upstream, the channel was fairly steep and deeply entrenched (Rosgen G4 channel) as a result of a head-cut which migrated upstream sometime in the distant past. Further downstream, the Rosgen C4 and F4 channels are less entrenched and are more accessible. The upstream segment was mostly stable and rock-armored, where downstream, bare and eroding banks were common. This is particularly apparent at the interface of Jackson Creek with an alluvial fan deposited on the western side of

this stream. Here, and along most of the lower segment, width/depth ratios were excessive, sinuosity was low, and general stream morphology was disturbed by livestock trails and trampling.

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

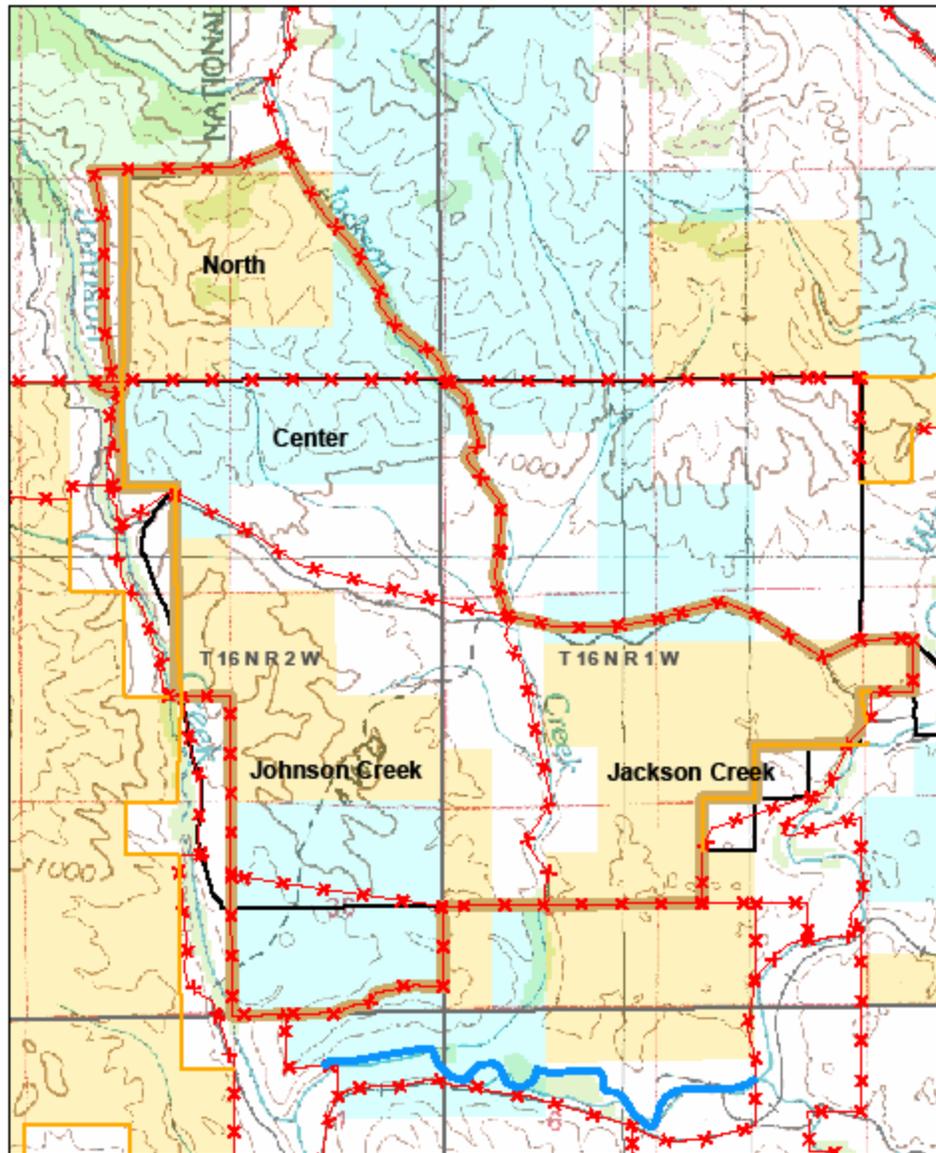
3.4.2.1 Alternative A

The segment of Jackson Creek would remain in functioning-at-risk condition over the short term through long terms. Historic deep down-cutting, followed by lateral movement in the stream channel, coupled with very coarse stream substrates, intermittent stream flows, and persistent drought, limit the potential of this stream segment to support healthy and vigorous obligate riparian plant species. The deeply entrenched stream channel confines and controls flooding flows, it is not expected that the channel would develop a functioning floodplain for the foreseeable future, regardless of the grazing prescription used.

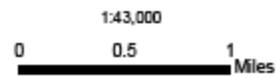
3.4.2.2 Alternative B

The segment of Jackson Creek would remain in functioning-at-risk condition over the short through long terms. Historic deep down-cutting, followed by lateral movement in the stream channel, coupled with very coarse stream substrates, intermittent stream flows, and persistent drought, limit the ability of this stream segment to support healthy and vigorous riparian plant species. The deeply entrenched stream channel confines and controls flooding flows, it is not expected that the channel would develop a functioning floodplain for the foreseeable future, regardless of the grazing prescription used. However, reducing livestock numbers and changing season of use would reduce browsing levels on existing woody vegetation on the stream terraces over the short through long terms, and if the drought cycle ended, some willow recruitment may occur.

Jackson Creek Allotment #158



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



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