

## Appendix A23 School Creek Allotment #247

### 1.0 Introduction

According to the RMP, School Creek Allotment #247 consists of two isolated parcels of public land totaling approximately 159 acres of public land and 1,700 acres of private land. The parcel in the northern portion of the allotment is approximately 40 acres, while the parcel in the southern portion of the allotment is approximately 119 acres in size. These two parcels are about 1½ miles apart, completely surrounded by private land with no public access.

Through the Evaluation and Determination, it was determined that:

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

### 2.0 Description of the Alternatives

#### 2.1 Alternative A – No Action /Continue Current Management

Current livestock grazing management would continue, with the existing grazing permit expiring February 28, 2010. Mandatory terms and conditions of the grazing permit are:

Permittee	Livestock	Season of Use	Percent Public Land	Grazing Preference		
				Active	Suspended	Total
Alvin and Nancy Yantis	20 cattle	04/01 to 04/30	100%	20	0	20

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

1. If you intend on renewing your base property lease agreement with Carola Holdings, Inc., you must notify the BLM in writing prior to the expiration of your current lease agreement. If renewal information is not received from you, or if your base property lease agreement is not renewed, this permit will be cancelled at the expiration of the current lease agreement.
2. Season of use and numbers of livestock are not restricted to those above provided overuse and deterioration does not occur to the public lands.
3. Pursuant to 43 CFR 10.4(b), the permittee must notify the BLM Field Manager, by telephone or with written confirmation, immediately upon the discovery of human remains, funerary objects, sacred objects, or objects of cultural patrimony on Federal Land. Pursuant to 43 CFR 10.4(c), the permittee must immediately stop any ongoing activities connected with the discovery and make a reasonable effort to protect the discovered remain or object.
4. Turn-out is subject to Boise District range readiness criteria.
5. Your certified Actual Use Report is due within 15 days of completing your authorized annual grazing use.
6. Salt and/or supplement shall not be placed within one-quarter (¼) mile of springs, streams, meadows, aspen stands, playas or water developments.
7. Changes to the scheduled use require prior approval.

8. 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.
9. Livestock exclosures located within your grazing allotment(s) are closed to all domestic grazing use.
10. Range improvements must be maintained in accordance with the cooperative agreements and range improvements permits in which you are a signator or assignee. Allotment boundary fences must be functioning prior to allowing livestock onto the allotment.
11. 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.
12. 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.

## **2.2 Alternative B – Proposed Action**

Based on field mapping of existing fences and information provided by the permittee, the acreage for School Creek Allotment has been recalculated. There is now one more acre of public land and 519 fewer acres of private land within the proposed allotment boundary than are shown in the RMP. The allotment now contains approximately 1,341 acres, including 160 acres of public land (12 percent) and 1,181 acres of private land (88 percent). These revised acres reflect the most accurate and up-to-date information, and would be used for the new term permit.

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

1. Modify the allotment boundary to correspond to existing fencelines;
2. Reduce the percent public land term of the grazing permit to 12 percent;
3. 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, without exceeding authorized AUMs.
4. Use Annual Indicators to insure progress is made toward 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 20 AUMs from April 15 through June 30. School Creek Allotment is one large pasture with the public land fenced in with private land; livestock use of the allotment is rotated with other private lands. 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 for ten years, from March 01, 2009 to February 28, 2019 as follows:

Permittee	Livestock (maximum)	Season of Use (maximum)	Percent Public Land	Preference (AUMs)		
				Active	Suspended	Total
Alvin and Nancy Yantis	150 Cattle	04/15 to 06/30	12%	20	0	20

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

1. Livestock grazing for School 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. Authorized AUMs would not be exceeded on public land. 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. Livestock turn-out is subject to Boise District range readiness criteria.
6. 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.
7. 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 and/or reducing livestock numbers. 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 to 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.

### **3.0 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. The predominant resource issues identified in the rangeland health assessment included; inadequate functional/structural groups in the plant community to promote nutrient and energy cycling, evidence of soil loss or degradation, a reduction of organic matter in the soil to promote resistance to erosion, dead or dying bitterbrush were observed, and invasive and noxious weed species. Evidence of wildlife use in the area in addition to livestock use was reported.

#### **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**

Term and Condition #2 of the current grazing permit allows unrestricted season-of-use and livestock numbers. With the proposed changes, this term and condition would be deleted and replaced with a maximum number of authorized livestock authorized to graze within an established season-of use. These changes would be expected to make improvements to the vegetation and make progress towards meeting the standard.

### **3.2 Soils**

#### **3.2.1 Affected Environment – Soils**

The Idaho rangeland health standard for watersheds, based on soil site stability and hydrologic function, is not being met on this allotment. Evidence of erosion, pedestalled plants, rills, water flow patterns, and inadequate plant distribution to promote infiltration was observed on the shallow soil sites.

#### **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**

Term and Condition #2 of the current grazing permit allows unrestricted season-of-use and livestock numbers. With the proposed changes, this term and condition would be deleted and replaced with a maximum number of authorized livestock authorized to graze within an established season-of use. These changes would be expected to make improvements to the vegetation and make progress towards meeting the standard.

## **3.3 Wildlife – Including Special Status Animal Species**

### **3.3.1 Affected Environment – Wildlife**

There are no populations of threatened, endangered, or sensitive animal species, or their habitat, known to occur on School Creek Allotment. The area does however serve as big, small, and non game habitat.

### **3.3.2 Environmental Consequences – Wildlife**

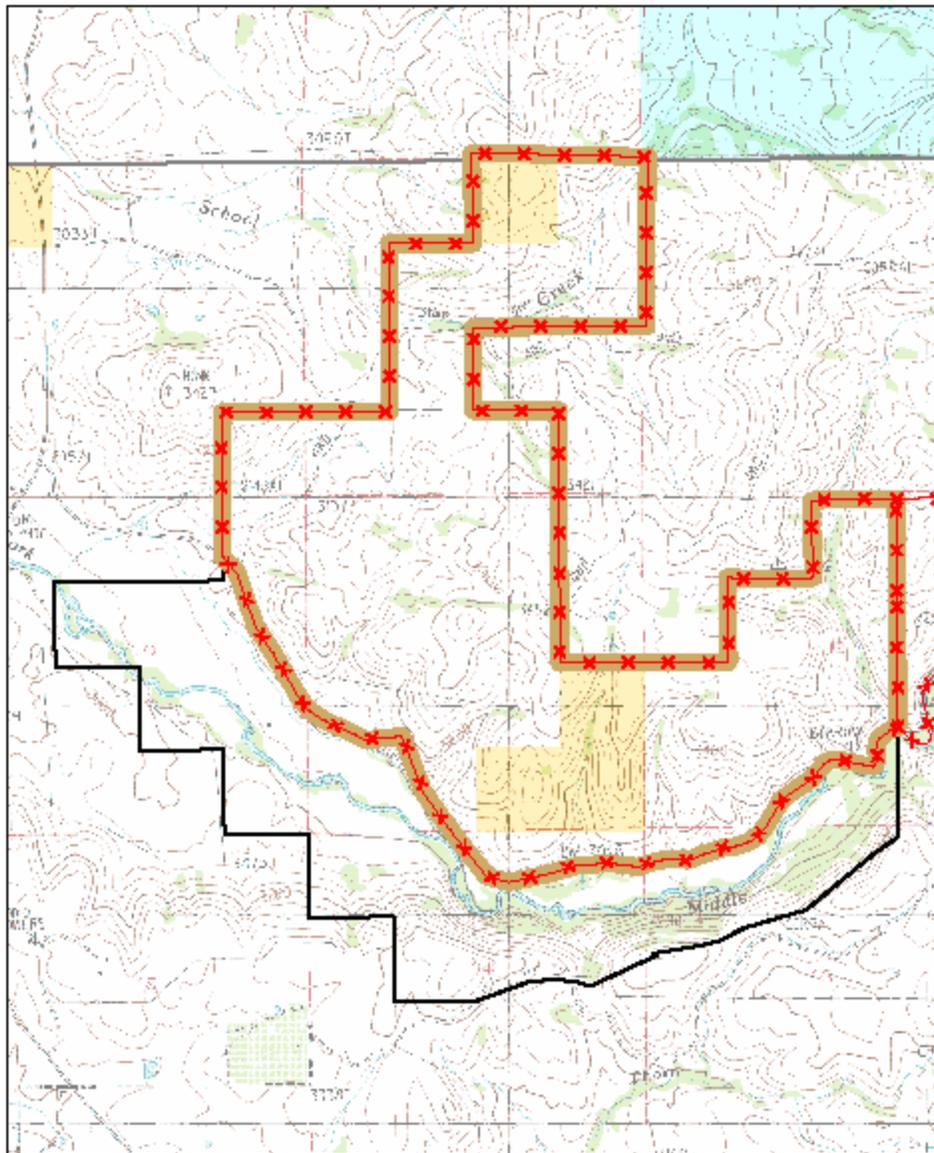
#### **3.3.2.1 Alternative A**

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. Impacts for wildlife are the same as for vegetation.

#### **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. Impacts on wildlife habitat are the same as for vegetation (see 3.1.2.2). Moving livestock turn-out from April 1, until April 15, will make slow progress towards wildlife habitat improvement over the long-term.

## School Creek Allotment #247 T 15 N R 1 W



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



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