

## Appendix A13 Hopper Creek Allotment #150

### 1.0 Introduction

According to the RMP, Hopper Allotment #150 consists of approximately 382 acres of public land and 160 acres of private land. Private land borders the public land on the east and south. There is no public access to this parcel of public land.

Through the Evaluation and Determination, it was determined that

- Livestock management is in conformance with the Watershed (#1) standard;
- Livestock management is not a factor in the non-conformance with the Native Plant Communities (#4) and Threatened and Endangered Species (#8) standards;
- Compliance with all applicable guidelines for livestock grazing management being achieved.

### 2.0 Description of the Alternatives

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

Livestock grazing management would continue on a season-long basis, with the current grazing permit expiring February 28, 2009. Mandatory terms and conditions of the grazing permit are:

Permittee	Livestock	Season of Use	Percent Public Land	Grazing Preference		
				Active	Suspended	Total
Kenneth Seid	40 Cattle	05/15 to 06/30	100%	62	0	62

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

1. Your base property lease for the Hopper Creek-East Allotment #150 and Deer Creek Allotment #151 has an indefinite expiration date. You must notify the BLM in writing, if there are any changes to your lease agreement with Clifford Hopper.
2. Scheduled use changes require prior approval on an annual basis. From information provided in the annual application, a grazing bill would be prepared indicating authorized use for that year.
3. The annual actual use report is due within 15 days of completing your authorized annual grazing use.
4. Turn-out is subject to range readiness. Range readiness occurs once physiological requirements of the plants have been met.
5. Annual maintenance of range improvements would be completed prior to livestock entry of the allotment.
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 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 (¼) mile of springs, streams, meadows, riparian habitats or aspen stands.

## 2.2 Alternative B – Proposed Action

Based on field mapping of existing fences and information provided by the permittee, the acreage for Hopper Creek Allotment #150 has been recalculated. There are 67 more acres of public land and 225 more acres of private land within the allotment boundary than are shown in the RMP. The allotment now contains approximately 834 acres total, of which 449 acres are public land (54 percent) and 385 acres are private land (46 percent). These revised acreages 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 from 100% to 54%;
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, and without exceeding authorized AUMs;
4. 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 be authorized for a maximum of 62 AUMs from mid-April through the end of June. 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:

Permittee	Livestock (maximum)	Season of Use (maximum)	Percent Public Land	AUMs		
				Active	Suspended	Preference
Kenneth Seid	80 Cattle	04/15 to 06/30	54%	62	0	62

Following are specific Terms and Conditions to be attached to the grazing permit for Hopper Creek Allotment #150.

1. Livestock grazing for Hopper 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 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 (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.
8. 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.

### **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 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.

## **3.0 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 due to causes other than current livestock grazing management practices. Invasive plants, noxious weeds, and the reduction of shrub density are biotic integrity issues in this

allotment. These issues are historical and current livestock management is not affecting these conditions.

### **3.1.2 Environmental Consequences – Vegetation**

#### **3.1.2.1 Alternative A**

Because livestock grazing management was not identified as the factor in the failure to meet the standard for native plant communities, livestock grazing proposed under this alternative is expected to not affect whether the standard is being met 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 proposed action would increase the acres of public land by 18 percent, but would not increase the allocated AUMs. Livestock grazing management changes under this alternative would allow livestock to enter the allotment one month earlier in the spring with up to 80 cattle. This would result in potentially 45 cattle on the allotment for a two month period. Under the current permit only 40 cattle are permitted for one month, which is currently meeting the rangeland health standard for native plant communities. Extending the season of use would result in increased use on plants which coincides with the critical growth period for perennial grasses. Conversely, short-term intensive use would result in more soil disturbance and trampling of vegetation. Either of these scenarios are not conducive to maintaining or improving the vigor or diversity of the native plant community and would likely result in a decrease in vigor and diversity.

## **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 being met on this allotment. A few soil stability and hydrologic function were identified to be beyond the normal range of variability due to the historic loss of shrubs. These issues are limited in scope and nature.

### **3.2.2 Environmental Consequences – Soils**

#### **3.2.2.1 Alternative A**

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**

Livestock grazing management changes under this alternative would allow livestock to enter the allotment one month earlier in the spring with up to 80 cattle. This would result in potentially 45 cattle on the allotment for a two month period. Under the current permit, up to 40 cattle are

permitted for one month, which is currently not a factor in not meeting the rangeland health standard for native plant communities. Extending the season of use would result in an increased potential for soil damage and compaction when soils are saturated from spring runoff or spring rains. Conversely, short-term intensive use, would result in more soil disturbance and trampling of vegetation, especially if use occurred early in the use period. Either of these scenarios are not conducive to maintaining or improving soil stability or hydrologic functioning to promote 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**

Recently radio telemetry studies have revealed that greater sage-grouse are using areas surrounding the allotment for both nesting/early brood-rearing habitat and later season habitat. Due to the high proportions of shrubs, sage grouse are suspected of using Hopper Creek Allotment.

#### **3.3.2 Environmental Consequences – Wildlife, Including Special Status Animal Species**

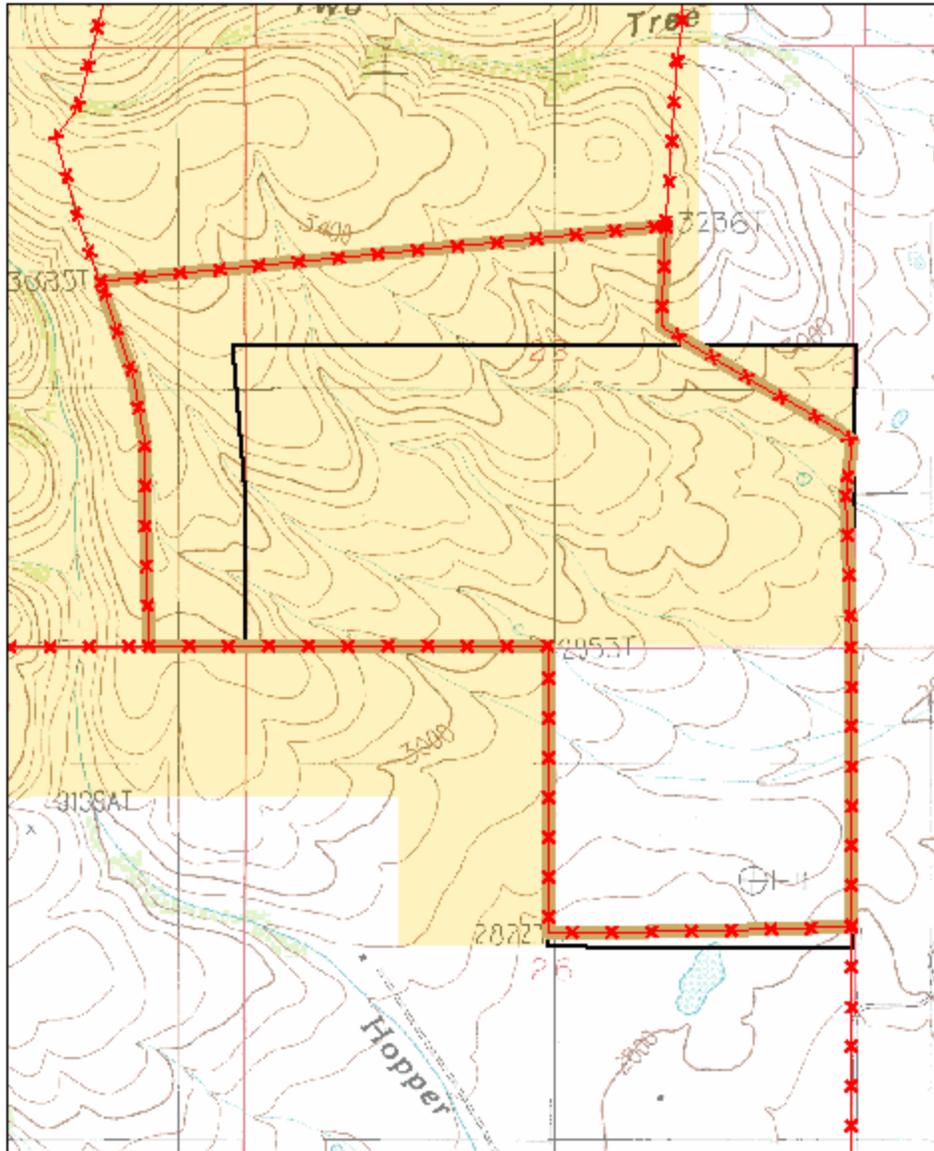
##### **3.3.2.1 Alternative A**

The Idaho rangeland health standard for special status animal species is not being met on this allotment due to causes other than current livestock grazing management practices. Therefore, livestock grazing management under this alternative is expected to not affect whether the standard is being met by maintaining or promoting healthy productive and diverse native animal habitat and populations of native plants appropriate to soil type, vegetation, climate and landform.

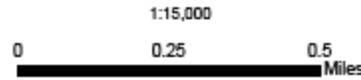
##### **3.3.2.2 Alternative B**

The Idaho rangeland health standard for special status animal species is not being met on this allotment due to causes other than current livestock grazing management practices. Therefore, livestock grazing management under this alternative is expected to continue to maintain or promote healthy productive and diverse native animal habitat and populations of native plants appropriate to soil type, vegetation, climate and landform.

## Hopper Creek Allotment #150 T 14N R 4W



Map Legend	
	Fence
	Proposed Allotment Boundary
	1988 Management Plan
	BLM
	Private



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