

Appendix A16 Little Pine Creek Allotment #156

1.0 Introduction

According to the RMP, Little Pine Creek Allotment #156 consists of approximately 200 acres of public land and 1,200 acres of private land. Public land is surrounded by private land with no public access. Little Pine Creek is grazed by two permittees that run in separate pastures; it is not managed as a community allotment. East Pasture has 80 acres of public land surrounded by 1,200 acres of private land. West Pasture contains 120 acres of public land and 400 acres of private land that are managed together in a rotational system.

Through the Evaluation and Determination, it was determined that

- Livestock management is in conformance with the Riparian Areas (#2) and Water Quality (#7) standards;
- Livestock management is a factor in the non-conformance to the Watershed (#1) and Native Plant Communities (#4) standards;
- Livestock management is not a factor in the non-conformance to the Channels and Flood Plains (#3) 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, 12).

2.0 Description of the Alternatives

2.1 Alternative A – No Action /Continue Current Management

Current livestock grazing management would continue, with East Pasture managed in a season-long manner and West Pasture managed in a rotational grazing manner. Monte Spiering's permit expires February 28, 2012; Artith Gibson Estate's permit expires February 28, 2009. Mandatory terms and conditions of the grazing permits are:

Permittee	Livestock	Season of Use	Percent Public Land	Grazing Preference		
				Active	Suspended	Total
Monte Spiering	5 Cattle	06/01 to 07/15	100%	7	0	7
Artith Gibson Estate	25 Cattle	05/09 to 05/15	67%	4	0	8
	25 Cattle	09/15 to 09/22	67%	4		

Allotment specific terms and conditions (Monte Spiering):

1. Livestock numbers will be coordinated between BLM and the lessees and may vary within the permitted use period, however, AUMs may not be exceeded. Any change to the scheduled use requires prior approval.
2. Livestock turnout dates are subject to Lower Snake River District range readiness criteria.
3. You are required to properly complete, sign, and date and Actual Grazing Use Report Form 4130.5 for each allotment. The completed form must be submitted to this office 15 days from the last day of your authorized annual grazing use.
4. Supplemental feeding is limited to salt, mineral, and/or protein in block, granular, or liquid form. If used, these supplements must be placed at least one-quarter (¼) mile away from any riparian area, spring, stream, meadow, aspen stand, playa, water development, or special status plant locations.

5. 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, scared 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.
6. Key herbaceous riparian vegetation, where streambank stability is dependent upon it, will have a minimum stubble height of 4 inches on streambank, along the greenline, after the grazing and growing season.
7. Key riparian browse vegetation will not be used more than 50% of the current annual twig growth that is within reach of the animals.
8. Key herbaceous riparian vegetation on riparian areas, other than the streambanks, will not be grazed more than 50% during the growing season, or 60% during the dormant season.
9. Streambank damage attributable to grazing livestock will be less than 10% on a stream segment.

Allotment specific terms and conditions (Artith Gibson Estate):

1. Key herbaceous riparian vegetation on riparian areas, will have a minimum stubble height of 6-inches on streambank, along the greenline, after the grazing and growing season.
2. Key riparian browse vegetation will not be used more than 50% of the current annual twig growth that is within reach of the animals.
3. Streambank damage attributable to grazing livestock will be less than 10% on a stream segment.
4. Grazing within the Little Pine Creek (west side) Allotment will follow the rotation system proposed within the Gibson Ranch Conservation Plan. Therefore, season of use and numbers of livestock on the Little Pine Creek (west side) are not restricted to those shown above provided, the terms and conditions listed herein are complied with.
5. The allotment listed on this grazing permit is subject to the requirement of 43 CFR 4180 -- Fundamentals of Rangeland Health and Guidelines for Grazing Administration. This permit shall be modified (if necessary) to meet these requirements upon completion of a standard and guidelines assessment and determination as scheduled by the Authorized officer.
6. Turn-out is subject to range readiness criteria
7. Your certified Actual Use Report is due within 15 days of completing your authorized annual grazing use.
8. Salt and/or mineral blocks shall not be placed on public lands within one quarter (1/4) mile of springs, streams, meadows, aspen stands, playas or water developments.
9. 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.
10. Livestock exclosures located within your grazing allotment(s) are closed to all domestic grazing use.
11. 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.
12. 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.

13. 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.

2.2 Alternative B – Proposed Action

Based on field mapping of existing fences and information provided by the permittees, acreage for Little Pine Creek Allotment has been recalculated. There are 1,472 more acres of private land within the allotment boundary than are shown in the RMP. The allotment now contains approximately 2,871 acres, including 200 acres of public land (7 percent) and 2,672 acres of private land (93 percent) within two pastures. 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. Each pasture would become a separate allotment, as follows:

Pasture	Public Land		Private Land (and others)		New Allotment Name
	Legal Description	Acres	Legal Description	Acres	
East Pasture	T16N, R4W, Section 28: SE $\frac{1}{4}$ SE $\frac{1}{4}$.	80	T16N, R4W, Section 33: SE $\frac{1}{4}$ NE $\frac{1}{4}$, SE $\frac{1}{4}$ Section 34: All	840	Little Pine Creek – East #1362
	Section 33: NE $\frac{1}{4}$ NE $\frac{1}{4}$.		T15N, R4W Section 2: SW $\frac{1}{4}$ - that portion lying west of Advent Gulch. Section 3: NW $\frac{1}{4}$, NW $\frac{1}{4}$ NE $\frac{1}{4}$, S $\frac{1}{2}$ Section 4: N $\frac{1}{2}$ NE $\frac{1}{4}$, SE $\frac{1}{4}$ NE $\frac{1}{4}$, NE $\frac{1}{4}$ SE $\frac{1}{4}$, S $\frac{1}{2}$ SE $\frac{1}{4}$ Section 9 and 10 – portions lying east of Hwy 71 Section 11: NW $\frac{1}{4}$, W $\frac{1}{2}$ NE $\frac{1}{4}$ - that portion lying west of Advent Gulch	1,108	
West Pasture	T16N, R4W, Section 33: N $\frac{1}{2}$ NW $\frac{1}{4}$, NW $\frac{1}{4}$ NE $\frac{1}{4}$	120	T16N, R4W, Section 33: SW $\frac{1}{4}$ NE $\frac{1}{4}$, SE $\frac{1}{4}$ NW $\frac{1}{4}$	52	Little Pine Creek – West #1361

2. Modify the percent public land term of the grazing permit to:

Little Pine Creek – East Allotment: Four percent (4%) public land
 Through riding efforts, cattle will be moved throughout the one pasture in a rotational grazing manner. Generally, the allotment would be stocked between the first part of July and mid-October. Typically only about ten head of cattle drift back and forth between the public land parcel and the private land due to the steepness of the country.

Little Pine Creek – West Allotment: Seventy percent (70%) public land
 Per a 1999 letter from Chad Gibson, the pasture in which public land is located is one of five pastures that make up the Gibson Ranch; the other four pastures contain private land only. Two additional pastures have since been established – now making a total of seven pastures. Pastures would be used for approximately one week each. The allotment (the one pasture containing public land) would be used between April 15 and May 30 with approximately 25 pairs or between September 1 and November 30 with approximately 25 dry cows.
3. The grazing permit shows 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. Rotational grazing would be conducted in such a manner that periodic rest or deferment during the critical growth stage would be provided (Guideline #4). To provide rest or deferment, public lands would not be grazed during the same one week period in consecutive years; nor would both spring and fall use occur during the same grazing year.
4. Use Annual Indicators to insure continued progress towards meeting Idaho Rangeland Health Standards.

Based on the proposed action, each of the two pastures would become a separate allotment. Livestock grazing would be authorized for a maximum of 7 AUMs for Little Pine Creek East Allotment from May 15 to October 30; and 8 AUMs for Little Pine Creek West Allotment for one week between April 15 to May 30 or one week between September 1 and November 30. Terms and conditions necessary to regulate grazing activities on public land would be added to each grazing permit. Annual Indicators would be used to describe utilization criteria. Grazing permits would be issued for a term of ten years, from March 01, 2009 to February 28, 2019 as follows:

Permittee	Allotment	Livestock (maximum)	Season of Use (maximum)	Percent Public Land	Grazing Preference		
					Active	Suspended	Total
Monte Spiering	Little Pine Creek – East	140 Cattle	05/15 to 10/30	04%	7	0	7
Artith Gibson Estate	Little Pine Creek – West	25 Cattle	04/15 to 05/15 10/01 to 10/30	70%	8	0	8

Terms and Conditions:

1. Livestock grazing for (appropriate allotment name to be inserted) 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.
 1. 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.
 2. Annual maintenance of range improvements would be completed prior to livestock entry of the allotment.
 3. Livestock turn-out is subject to Boise District range readiness criteria.
 4. 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.
 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. For Little Pine Creek West: Use would occur either during the Spring or the Fall; both seasons will not be used during the same grazing year.

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 would be used to ensure adherence with Annual Indicators, listed below. Modifications may include, but are not limited to: annual modifications to the duration of grazing use by pasture, and/or reducing livestock numbers by pasture. These modifications would be coordinated annually during pre-turnout meetings 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 all shrubs would not exceed 30 percent of current year's production as determined by Browse Removal Method, or other approved methods.

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

Little Pine Creek - East – The plant community was diverse and healthy and few biotic integrity indicators were identified as having issues.

Little Pine Creek - West – The plant community at one of the assessment locations was functioning adequately for proper nutrient and energy cycling. However, the plant community at the other assessment location had moderate reduction of shrubs and perennial grasses and invasive and noxious weeds.

3.1.2 Environmental Consequences – Vegetation

3.1.2.1 Alternative A

East Pasture - The Idaho rangeland health standard for native plant communities is being met in this pasture. 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.

West Pasture - The Idaho rangeland health standard for native plant communities is not being met in this pasture. 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

Little Pine Creek - East – No changes are proposed under this alternative, therefore the environmental consequences would be the same as those described for Alternative A.

Little Pine Creek - West – The livestock grazing management practices proposed under this alternative would improve the vigor and diversity of the native plant community by restricting use to either spring or fall use in a given year. Dual periods of use in the same growing year are not conducive to healthy and diverse plant communities and put additional stress on plants in drought years. Under this alternative livestock numbers and AUMs would remain the same; the

season of use window has been extended to allow flexibility for climatic shifts and plant phenology.

3.2 Soils

3.2.1 Affected Environment – Soils

East Pasture – Evidence of excessive bare ground, reduced resistance to soil surface erosion was observed. Plant community composition and distribution was not conducive to increasing infiltration and reducing runoff.

West Pasture – One field assessment identified soil stability and hydrologic function beyond the normal range of variability; at the other assessment location, all indicators of rangeland health were within the normal range of variability for the ecological site, except bare ground which was less than expected.

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 not being met in either pasture on this allotment. 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

Little Pine Creek - East – No changes to livestock grazing management practices are proposed under this alternative for Little Pine Creek East Allotment, therefore the environmental consequences are expected to be the same as those described for Alternative A.

Little Pine Creek - West – Changes proposed under this alternative would make improvements to the soil structure by limiting the use period to once a year. The soil damage from hoof shearing is not as likely to occur when use is made during the fall.

3.3 Wildlife – Including Special Status Animal Species

3.3.1 Affected Environment – Wildlife – Including Special Status Animal Species

There are no populations of threatened, endangered, or sensitive animal species, or their habitat, known to occur on Little Pine Creek Allotment.

3.3.2 Environmental Consequences – Wildlife – Including Special Status Animal Species

3.3.2.1 Alternative A

East Pasture - The Idaho rangeland health standard for special status animal species is being met in this pasture. 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.

West Pasture - The Idaho rangeland health standard for special status animal species is not being met in this pasture. Factors other than livestock grazing management have contributed to the pasture not meeting the standard.

3.3.2.2 Alternative B

Little Pine Creek - East - The Idaho rangeland health standard for special status animal species is being met in this pasture. 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.

Little Pine Creek - West - The Idaho rangeland health standard for special status animal species is not being met in this pasture, but because of factors other than livestock grazing management. However, 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.

3.4 Riparian Areas, Water Quality, and Fisheries

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

Vegetation classification of Little Pine Creek is “quaking aspen/redosier dogwood” (*Populus tremuloides/Cornus sericea*), and “black hawthorn/snowberry” (*Crataegus douglasii / Symphoricarpos albus*). The riparian vegetation is a healthy and diverse assemblage of potential natural plant community species represented by many age classes of mostly woody vegetation. Canopy cover was estimated between 70 and 80 percent. Floodplain vegetation is moderately affected by grazing as livestock forage and trail through the narrow valley. Bare ground was estimated to average 15 percent, with localized areas of heavy livestock impacts being nearly 40 percent (based on ocular estimates) on the stream terraces. The active channel had considerably less grazing impacts to the vegetation and the stream was mostly reliant on deep rooted woody vegetation which provides good bank stability here. Recruitment of quaking aspen continues to occur on the old floodplain, but many new shoots were browsed by livestock.

The stream channel type is B4 (Rosgen, 1996). These streams typically have low sinuosity and good sediment transport rates. When functioning properly, the B4 stream system is inherently stable.

Pool/riffle ratios were not appropriate in this segment. One pool for every four bank-full (bf) widths is expected (Rosgen, 1996). For Little Pine Creek (LTPINE-000.6 (West Pasture), expected pool/riffle ratio would be $[4(9.5)] = 38$ feet. However, pools are nearly non-existent and stream substrates consisted of solidly imbedded particles with a median diameter estimated at 10 millimeters.

The reason for this anomaly is unknown, and may be a natural characteristic of the stream substrates, or could have resulted from the 1997 watershed event which produced large scouring flows in this stream.

Little Pine Creek was rated in functioning-at-risk condition with static trend for Standard #3; however, livestock grazing was not a significant factor. Isolated areas of shearing and bank alteration do occur along this segment; however, access to the stream is limited by dense patches of black hawthorn

Water quality standards for cold water biota and salmonid spawning were met on this segment of Little Pine Creek

This segment supports a very small population of redband trout, although aquatic habitat is not sufficient to support a viable salmonid community. An irrigation diversion structure exists on the lower portion of this stream segment in West Pasture, and may present an impassible barrier to salmonid movement within the drainage.

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

3.4.2.1 Alternative A – Riparian Areas, Water Quality, and Fisheries

Little Pine Creek would continue to maintain proper function condition for Standard 2 (riparian vegetation) over the short through long terms. The stream would continue in functioning-at-risk condition for Standard 3 (stream channel and floodplain) over the short term. Over the long term the stream may improved channel characteristics.

Water quality would continue to be met for cold water biota and salmonid spawning over the short through long terms.

Fisheries would continue to be limited by poor aquatic habitat conditions over the short through long terms.

3.4.2.2 Alternative B – Riparian Areas, Water Quality, and Fisheries

The environmental consequence from implementing the proposed action would be identical to Alternative A.

Fisheries would continue to be limited by poor aquatic habitat conditions over the short through long terms.

Little Pine Creek-West #1361 and East #1362 Allotments

